साहस के साथी

भारतीय स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम के आरंभिक दौर में भाग लेने वाले कुछ साहसी व्यक्तियों के जीवन की घटनाएँ

लेखक

मनोज दास

अनुवाद

मंजुल अवस्थी

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्

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प्रकाशन विभाग में सचिव, राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, श्री अरविन्द मार्ग, नई दिल्ली 110016 द्वारा प्रकाशित तथा एन.के. एन्टरप्राइजेज़ 4782/2-23 दरियागंज, नई दिल्ली 110002 द्वारा मुद्रित।

प्राक्कथन

विद्यालयी-शिक्षा में सर्वतोन्मुखी गुणात्मक सुधार लाने के अपने प्रयासों में एक ओर तो परिषद् बालकों की शैक्षिक क्षमताओं को विकसित करने के उपाय कर रही है तथा दूसरी ओर उनमें सामाजिकता और नैतिकता की भावनाओं का विकास करने में भी अपना योगदान दे रही है। बाल्यावस्था में विद्यार्थियों का मन बहुत ग्रहणशील होता है। यदि इस अवस्था में उनमें सम्यक् अभिवृत्तियाँ विकसित नहीं की जातीं तो बाद की अवस्था में उनके मन को स्वस्थ दिशाओं में विकसित करने में सहायता दे पाना बहुत कठिन हो जाता है। यही कारण है कि सभी शिक्षा-समितियाँ और आयोग स्कूल स्तर पर बच्चों को नैतिक शिक्षा अथवा सम्यक् जीवन-मूल्यों की शिक्षा प्रदान करने की आवश्यकता पर बल देते रहे हैं। नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (1986) में इस तथ्य पर बल देते हुए कहा गया है–

''समाज में अनिवार्य जीवन-मूल्यों के स्खलन और बढ़ती हुई कटुताओं के कारण पाठ्यक्रम को पुनः संयोजित करने की आवश्यकता पर पहले से अधिक ध्यान देने की जरूरत है ताकि शिक्षा को सामाजिक, नैतिक और आदर्श जीवन-मूल्यों को प्रजनित करने का एक शक्तिशाली माध्यम बनाया जा सके।''

आज पूरे विश्व में जीवन-मूल्यों की शिक्षा प्रदान करने की जरूरत को स्वीकार किया जा रहा है। संसार के कई देशों में इस मुद्दे पर चर्चाएँ चल रही हैं कि बच्चों में सही जीवन-मूल्यों को अंकुरित करने का सबसे अच्छा तरीका क्या होना चाहिए। ज्ञान के इस नए क्षेत्र में अभी और भी खोजें की जानी हैं। आरंभ में हमारे जो भी प्रयास होंगे वे स्वभावतया कामचलाऊ ही होंगे। इस तथ्य को ध्यान में रखते हुए परिषद् ने ''जीवन-मूल्यों की शिक्षा'' शीर्षक प्रोजेक्ट पर कार्य करने का निर्णय किया है। अपने पहले प्रयास के रूप में हमारा प्रयत्न है कि अध्यापकों और विद्यार्थियों के पढ़ने के लिए कुछ ऐसी पठन-सामग्री विकसित की जाए जिसकी सहायता से जीवन-मूल्यों के अंकुरण, संप्रत्ययन और इससे संबंधित धारणाओं के प्रति जन-जागृति पैदा की जा सके।

''साहस के धनी'' पुस्तक सुविख्यात लेखक श्री मनोज दास की अंग्रेजी में लिखी पुस्तक ''कंटूर्स ऑफ करेज'' का हिंदी अनुवाद है। इस पुस्तक में लेखक ने छोटे बच्चों के लिए ऐसे लोगों के जीवन की असली

कहानियाँ प्रस्तुत की हैं कि जिनके मन-मस्तिष्क असाधारण साहस और संकल्प से पूरित रहे हैं। इन कहानियों से स्पष्ट होता है कि प्रत्येक स्त्री और पुरुष में अजेय इच्छा शक्ति और संकल्प-शक्ति विद्यमान है। इसी इच्छा शक्ति के सहारे वे अपने जीवन की विषमतम परिस्थितियों का सामना करते हैं और विपरीत घटनाक्रमों मे भी अपने देश की सुरक्षा, स्वतंत्रता और कल्याण के लिए काम करने की शक्ति जुटा पाते हैं। इन कहानियो में देश-भक्ति, धर्म-निरपेक्षता, निष्ठा और अभय की भावनाओं की अद्‌भुत और बहुविध अभिव्यक्ति हुई है जिनका पाठक के मन पर अमिट प्रभाव पड़ता है।

श्री मनोज दास में कहानी कहने की कला अद्वितीय रूप से विद्यमान है। हमें पूरा विश्वास है कि ये कहानियाँ हमारे देश के अधिसंख्य बच्चों में प्रेरणा फूँक सकेंगी। मैं श्री मनोज दास के प्रति अपना हार्दिक धन्यवाद अभिव्यक्त करता हूँ कि उन्होंने हमारे अनुरोध को स्वीकार करके भारत के बच्चों के लिए यह सुंदर पुस्तक लिखी।

''जीवन-मूल्यों की शिक्षा'' प्रोजेक्ट का काम परिषद् के प्रो० अनिल विद्यालंकार, विभागाध्यक्ष, सामाजिक विज्ञान एवं मानविकी शिक्षा विभाग के निर्देशन में चल रहा है। यह पुस्तक इसी कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत प्रकाशित की जा रही है। इसी विभाग की प्रो० (कु०) एस०के० राम ने इन कहानियों का अंतिम रूप से चयन और संपादन किया है। इस महत्वपूर्ण कार्य को करने के लिए मैं अपने इन दोनों सहयोगियों को धन्यवाद देता हूँ। इस पुस्तक का हिंदी अनुवाद श्री मजुल अवस्थी ने किया है, मैं उन्हें भी धन्यवाद देता हूँ।

जो अध्यापक, विद्यार्थी और अभिभावक इसे पढ़ें, उनसे अनुरोध है कि वे अपनी सम्मतियाँ और सुझाव भेजकर हमें अनुगृहीत करें।

पी०एल० मल्होत्रा
निदेशक
राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्

लेखकीय

इस पुस्तक में भारतीय स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम की सिलसिलेवार तस्वीर प्रस्तुत करना हमारा उद्देश्य कदापि नहीं है, बल्कि इस संग्रह में स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम से जुड़े कुछ ऐसे व्यक्तियों के लुभावने चरित्र प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं जिन्होंने इस संग्राम में भाग लेकर अपने उल्लेखनीय साहस का परिचय दिया। हमने इन व्यक्तियों की जीवन-गाथाएँ इतिहास से ली हैं, खासतौर से उन वृत्तांतों से, जिन्हें अंग्रेजों ने स्वयं ही लिखा था।

ये जीवन-वृत्तांत ब्रिटिश-शासन के आरंभिक दौर में उनके विरुद्ध भड़क उठे आक्रोश के तीन पहलुओं पर प्रकाश डालते हैं। पहले तीन अध्यायों में स्वतंत्रता के लिए लड़े गए प्रथम युद्ध से पहले की घटनाओं का वर्णन है, इनके बाद के छह अध्यायों में ऐसे वीरों के साहसपूर्ण कार्यों का वर्णन है जिन्होंने युद्ध के समय अद्भुत शूरवीरता का प्रदर्शन किया। अंतिम अध्याय में उन्नीसवीं सदी के पहले और दूसरे दशकों में उमड़ रही क्रांतिकारी भावनाओं पर प्रकाश डाला गया है।

श्री अरविन्द अंतर्राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा केन्द्र
पांडिचेरी

मनोज दास

विषय सूची

1

वह आदमी जिसने आखिरी तीर चलाया

सन् 1857 ई० से दो साल पहले की बात है। उन दिनों हमारे देश में अंग्रेजों की हकूमत थी। अचानक ऐसा हुआ कि हमारे कुछ देशवासी अंग्रेजों की हकूमत के खिलाफ़ इतने भयंकर रूप में भड़क उठे जिसकी अंग्रेजों को कतई उम्मीद नहीं थी। हमारे ये देशवासी एक बड़े भू-भाग में रहा करते थे। इन लोगों ने छाती ठोककर कह दिया कि अब उन्हें अंग्रेजों की और अधिक हकूमत बर्दाश्त नहीं होगी, चाहे कुछ भी क्यों न हो जाए। इन लोगों को अंग्रेजों की गुलामी इतनी अखरने लगी थी कि लोग अब हर हालत में इस दासता से स्वतंत्र होने की कामना करने लगे थे। इन लोगों को विश्वास हो गया था कि यदि संसार में इनका कोई सच्चा मालिक हो सकता है तो वह ईश्वर ही हो सकता है, अंग्रेज लोग या ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी तो कभी भी इनके स्वामी नहीं हो सकते।

लेकिन हर आज़ादी की एक कीमत चुकानी होती है। क्या आप सोच सकते हैं कि इन लोगों ने आज़ादी प्राप्त करने के लिए क्या-क्या उपाय सोचे होंगे? ये लोग तीरंदाज लोग थे। अगर ये लोग चाहते तो इनके सामने सबसे सरल उपाय यह था कि वे घात लगा-लगाकर अंग्रेजों को धीरे-धीरे अपने तीरों का निशाना बनाते चलते। अंत में अंग्रेज लोग भयाक्रांत होकर स्वयं ही उनका इलाका छोड़ जाते। किन्तु ये लोग चरित्रवान लोग थे। घात लगाकर अपने शत्रुओं को तीरों से छेद डालना इनके लिए बड़ा सरल काम था, लेकिन धोखे से शत्रु को मारना इनकी परंपरा नहीं थी। इन लोगों की आत्मा ने इन्हें इतना नीच नहीं बनने दिया था। ये लोग अच्छी तरह जान चुके थे कि अब इनके पास केवल एक ही रास्ता बचा है और वह है अंग्रेजों से आमने-सामने का युद्ध। इसलिए इन्होंने अंग्रेजों से आमने-सामने दो-दो हाथ करने का फैसला कर लिया।

क्योंकि अंग्रेज लोगों को इस प्रकार के विद्रोह की पहले से तनिक भी भनक नही लग पाई थी, इसलिए सब

के सब अंग्रेज अधिकारी इस अचानक फूट पड़े विद्रोह को देखकर ठगे-से रह गए। हमारे ये देशवासी जंगलों में रहा करते थे। जिस तरह जंगल के वृक्ष बड़े धैर्यवान और विनम्र होते हैं उसी तरह ये लोग भी बहुत धीरजवाले और स्वभाव से बड़े कोमल और विनम्र थे। लेकिन जो विदेशी शासक इन पर जुल्म पर जुल्म ढाते चले जा रहे हों, उनके खिलाफ आवाज़ तो उठानी ही थी। हमने वृक्षों के धीरज की चर्चा की। और धीरज भी कैसा अद्‌भुत धीरज! आप वृक्ष को कुल्हाड़ियों से छाँटते जाइए, वह उफ तक नहीं करेगा और आखिर मे छँटते-छँटते स्वयं जमीन पर गिर पड़ेगा। यही स्वभाव इन संथाल लोगों का था। जब तक इन लोगों में सहन-शक्ति रही, ये अंग्रेजों के जुल्म सहते रहे। बात यह थी कि सन् 1838 में अंग्रेजों ने इन लोगों को कुछ भूमि पट्‌टे पर दी थी। इस भूमि के लगान के रूप में इन संथाल भाइयों को उन दिनों दो हज़ार रुपये की रकम चुकानी पड़ती थी। उन दिनों यह एक मोटी रकम हुआ करती थी। जब अंग्रेजों को इतने से भी संतोष नहीं हुआ तो उन्होंने कुछ साल बाद इस रकम को बढ़ाकर चवालीस हज़ार रुपये कर लिया। तब भी संथाल भाइयों ने उफ तक नहीं की। वे अपना पेट काट-काटकर अंग्रेजों को चवालीस हज़ार रुपये भी चुकाते रहे। जब इनके पास धन की जुगाड़ नहीं हो पाती थी तो ये लोग कर्ज़ लेने के लिए ज़मीदारो का दरवाजा खटखटाते थे। और ये ज़मींदार भी इतने अधिक सूदखोर हुआ करते थे कि कर्ज़ के सौ रुपयों पर पाँच-पाँच सौ रुपये तक ब्याज वसूल किया करते थे। जब तक ये लोग उधार की रकम चुका नहीं पाते थे तब तक कर्ज़े के बदले इन्हें जमीदारों के खेतों-खलिहानों में गुलामों की तरह बेगार करनी पड़ा करती थी। कभी-कभी तो ऐसा भी होता था कि ऋण लिया दादा ने, बेगारी भुगतते थे नाती-पोते। आखिर कोई करता भी क्या? प्रथा ही कुछ ऐसी थी। लेकिन इस पर भी जब तक इन संथाल भाइयो से बना, ये मन मसोस-मसोसकर जमींदारों के सब अत्याचार सहते रहे। आप सोचेंगे, आखिर ऐसा हुआ क्या कि ये संथाल लोग, जो इतने विनम्र और सहनशील थे, वे एकाएक इतने क्यों भड़क उठे और अंग्रेजों के इतने कट्‌टर दुश्मन कैसे बन गए? सोचने की बात है कि जो लोग जंगलों मे बाघ-चीतों और मगरमच्छ-घड़ियालो जैसे भयानक जीवों के बीच आसानी से रह लेते थे, वे लोग अंग्रेजों और उनके गुर्गे जमींदारों के बीच क्यों नहीं रह पाए?

शायद इन लोगों की सहन-शक्ति की सीमा आ चुकी थी। एक तो भूख और उस पर अंग्रेजों के जुल्म उन्हें मारे डाल रहे थे। मरना तो उन्हे था ही। लेकिन उन्होंने इस तरह मरने के बजाय लड़ते-लड़ते शान से मरने का फैसला किया।

बंगाल के गहन जंगलोंवाले संथाल परगना और वीरभूम जिले में रह रहे पचास हजार व्यक्ति मानो एक

व्यक्ति के रूप में उठ खड़े हुए। उन्होंने बीन-बीनकर ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के कार्यालयों को जला डाला। कुछ ब्रिटिश अधिकारी और अपनी क्रूरता के लिए कुख्यात कुछ ज़मींदार लोग भी मार डाले गए। ये लोग नाचते हुए स्वतंत्रता की लय पर आजादी के गीत गाने लगे–

"हम सब ईश्वर की संतान।
नहीं किसी के और गुलाम।"

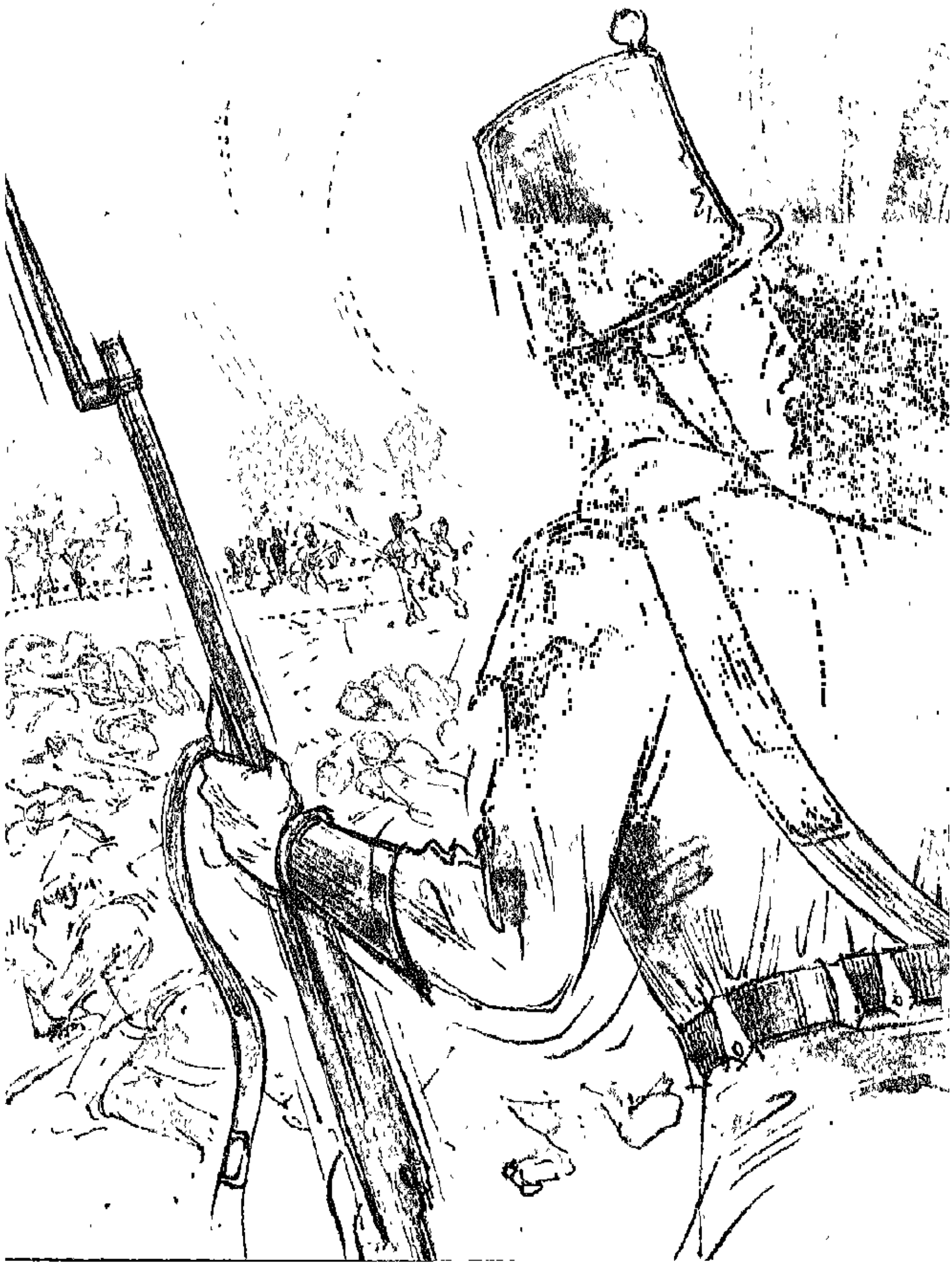
ब्रिटिश सिपाहियों के लिए इतने घने जंगलों में जाने का यह पहला अवसर था। उन्होंने इस विद्रोह को कुचलने के लिए कई तरह के नए-नए उपाय किए। एक बार तो उन्होंने पचास हाथियों को शराब पिला दी। हाथी पागल हो गए। इन पागल हाथियों को आदिवासियों के गाँवों की ओर छोड़ दिया गया। इन हाथियों ने सैकड़ों औरतों और बच्चों को अपने पैरों तले रौंद-रौंदकर मार डाला।

संथालों को लड़ाई लड़ने का सिर्फ एक ही तरीका आता था–आमने-सामने की स्पष्ट लड़ाई। चतुराई से युद्ध की योजनाएँ बनाना और चालाकी से लड़ना उन्हें आता ही नहीं था। वे तो चुपचाप एक समूह में इकट्ठे होकर खड़े हो जाते और शत्रु के आने का इंतजार करते रहते। जब शत्रु सामने आ जाता तो वे तीर चलाने लगते। शत्रु-पक्ष की ओर से उन पर बंदूकों और तोपों से गोलियाँ-गोले बरसाए जाते। किंतु गोलियों और आग से डरकर पीछे हट जाना उनके स्वभाव में ही नहीं था। पीछे हटना तो उन्होंने अपने जीवन में कभी सीखा ही नहीं था। वे अपने मोर्चों पर तब तक डटे रहते जब तक कि या तो शत्रु उन्हें मार डाले या वे शत्रु को मार डालें।

कई अंग्रेज सिपाहियो ने संथालो के इस विचित्र व्यवहार के बारे में बयान दिए, जिन्हें बाद में इतिहासकार हंटर ने अपने इतिहास में लिखा भी। एक ब्रिटिश कप्तान ने तो यहाँ तक कहा कि इस लड़ाई मे शायद ही कोई ऐसा ब्रिटिश सिपाही रहा हो जिसे इन निश्छल, सीधे-सादे और प्रायः निहत्थे संथालों से लड़ते हुए शर्म न महसूस हुई हो।

ब्रिटिश सिपाहियों को आदेश था कि जैसे ही उन्हे कोई गाँव दिखाई दे वे अचानक उस पर धावा बोल दें। जंगल इतने घने थे कि उनमें बसे गाँवों को खोज पाना बड़ा दूभर काम था। अतः आक्रमणकारी सेनाओं को यह सुझाव दिया गया–"वृक्षों की चोटियो को देखते रहो। जब तुम्हें इनसे होकर धुआँ ऊपर उठता दिखाई दे, समझ जाओ कि इन वृक्षों के नीचे गाँव बसा है।"

इस तरह टोह लगाते-लगाते एक दिन अंग्रेजो की फौजें एक गाँव में जा पहुँचीं। गाँववालों ने भी आव देखा न ताव, बस इन जवानों पर तीरों की बौछार शुरू कर दी। एक घर से तीर पर तीर छूटते चले आ रहे थे।





फौज के सिपाहियों ने इस घर को चारों तरफ से घेर लिया। उन्होंने घर की दीवारों में छेद करके उनमें अपनी बंदूकों की नलियाँ सटा दीं और धुआँधार गोलियाँ दागने लगे। जब बहुत देर तक गोलीबारी हो चुकी तो फौज के कप्तान ने पुकारा– "अब तुम लोग बाहर निकल आओ और अपने आपको हमारे हवाले कर दो।" लेकिन भीतर से कोई जवाब नहीं आया। बस तीर पर तीर आते रहे। अंग्रेज बार-बार कहते कि आत्म-समर्पण कर दो, लेकिन जवाब में सिर्फ तीर ही आते।

यह सिलसिला कुछ देर तक और चलता रहा। जैसे-जैसे गोलीबारी बढ़ती जाती, भीतर से तीर आने कम होते जाते। यहाँ तक कि एक वक्त ऐसा भी आ गया कि भीतर से केवल एक ही तीर जवाब में मिलता। और ··· अब वह तीर भी आना बंद हो गया। फौज ने घर का दरवाज़ा तोड़ दिया और घर के भीतर घुस आई।

भीतर आकर फौज ने देखा कि कई लोग मरे पड़े हैं। कुछ लोग कराह रहे हैं और धीरे-धीरे दम तोड़ते जा रहे हैं। इन लोगों में अब सिर्फ एक बूढ़ा आदमी जिन्दा बचा था। वह आदमी लाशों के अंबार के बीचों-बीच आकर खड़ा हो गया। यह वही आदमी था जिसने आखिरी तीर चलाया था। अंग्रेज फौज बूढ़े आदमी पर धुआँधार गोलियाँ बरसाने लगी। उस आदमी की दाईं बाजू छलनी-छलनी हो गई। अब वह मजबूर हो गया था, तीर चलाता भी तो कैसे?

फौज का कप्तान बूढ़े आदमी की ओर लपका और चीख उठा– "अपने आपको हमारे हवाले कर दो।" तभी बूढ़े आदमी ने अपना खंजर खींच लिया और पलभर में देखते-ही-देखते फौजी कप्तान का सिर धड से कटकर जमीन पर आ गिरा। उस आदमी का दायाँ हाथ ही तो बेकार हुआ था, बायाँ तो सही-सलामत था।

अपने कप्तान की मौत पर फौज भड़क उठी और क्रोध के मारे धुआँधार गोलियाँ बरसाने लगी। अब वह बूढ़ा आदमी भी लाशों के अंबार में गिर पड़ा।

संथाल लोगों की आजादी की लड़ाई अब समाप्त हो चुकी थी। इस लड़ाई में पच्चीस हज़ार लोग काम आए।

आखिर इस आदमी का, जिसने कि आखिरी तीर चलाया था, नाम क्या था? इस आदमी के नाम के बारे में इतिहास खामोश है। लेकिन क्या इस आदमी को हम कोई नाम नहीं दे सकते? नाम तो दिया ही जा सकता है। इस आदमी का नाम हो सकता है–अपराजेय शूरवीर!

2

कर्नाटक प्रदेश में एक रियासत थी–कित्तूर। इस रियासत की एक रानी थी। आज से लगभग डेढ़ सौ बरस पहले इस रानी ने अपने राज्य की स्वतंत्रता के लिए बड़ा भारी संग्राम किया था। यही कारण है कि कर्नाटक प्रदेश के उत्तर-पश्चिमी इलाकों मे प्रचलित लोकगीतों में इस रानी का नाम आज भी एक बहादुर और सर्वश्रेष्ठ रानी के रूप में लिया जाता है।

उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी के आरंभ के दिन थे। इस राज्य में मल्ल सुर्जा नाम के एक राजा राज्य करते थे। मल्ल सुर्जा के दो रानियाँ थीं–रुद्रम्मा और चेनम्मा। बड़ी रानी को राजकाज के मामलों में कोई दिलचस्पी नहीं थी। लेकिन चेनम्मा रानी अपने पति के गिरते स्वास्थ्य के प्रति बहुत चिंतित रहा करती थी। वह हमेशा चौकस रहा करती थी और अपने पति की राजकाज की जिम्मेदारियों में हाथ बँटाया करती थी।

सन् 1816 में मल्ल सुर्जा चल बसे। चेनम्मा रानी ने रुद्रम्मा के बेटे बापू साहब को राजगद्दी पर बैठा दिया और स्वयं अपने बेटे को उसका अंगरक्षक बना दिया। दुर्भाग्य से इन दोनों राजकुमारों की जवानी में ही मौत हो गई। रानी की हिम्मत टूट गई। किन्तु रानी दूरदर्शी थी। मृत्यु-शय्या पर पड़े राजा ने रानी की इच्छा के अनुसार एक बेटा गोद ले लिया। अब रानी ने शासन की बागडोर अपने हाथों में संभाल ली और वह उस दिन का इंतजार करने लगी जब वह बेटा बड़ा होकर राजकाज सँभाल लेगा। रानी की इच्छा थी कि इसके बाद वह किसी तीर्थ स्थान पर चली जाएगी और शांति से अपने जीवन के शेष दिन बिताएगी।

एक शासक के रूप मे चेनम्मा रानी बहुत सफल सिद्ध हुई। उसके राज्य की प्रजा चेनम्मा रानी को अपनी माँ और एक देवी के रूप में पूजती थी। वह बहुत न्यायप्रिय और उदार थी। उसका हृदय बहुत कोमल था। लेकिन वह हमेशा अपने आदर्शों और सिद्धान्तों पर दृढ़ रहा करती थी।

कित्तूर राज्य में कुछ कपटी लोग भी थे। इन्हें राज्य की सुख-शांति अच्छी नहीं लगती थी और ये लोग





तरह-तरह की विघ्न-बाधाएँ खड़ी करते रहते थे। यदि ये लोग न होते तो राज्य में सुख-शांति बनी रहती। इन छली-प्रपंची लोगों में एक थैकरे नाम का एक आदमी भी था। थैकरे ईस्ट इंडिया कम्पनी का एक अधिकारी था। उसने अस्त्र-शस्त्रों से लैस एक फौज तैयार की और कित्तूर आ पहुँचा। उसका कहना था कि क्योंकि अब बापू साहब की मृत्यु हो गई है इसलिए कित्तूर राज्य पर कंपनी का अधिकार हो गया है।

थैकरे का यह दावा अचरज भरा तो था ही, निर्लज्जतापूर्ण और मनगढ़ंत भी था। ऐसा कभी कोई नियम ही नहीं बनाया गया था जिसके अनुसार कित्तूर को कंपनी के अधीन लाया जा सकता हो। कंपनी को कित्तूर के मामलों में किसी प्रकार का हस्तक्षेप करने का अधिकार नहीं था, इस राज्य को अपने अधिकार में लेने की तो बात ही दूर रही।

किन्तु थैकरे बहुत धृष्ट और धूर्त था। उसने रानी को अपने कैंप में आने का बुलावा भेजा। रानी बहुत झल्लाई और उसने इस बुलावे की अवहेलना कर दी। इसके अलावा वह और कर भी क्या सकती थी? आखिर थैकरे ने रानी को अंतिम चेतावनी दी। रानी ने इस पर भी ध्यान नहीं दिया। अब क्या था। थैकरे ने महल के चारों ओर तोपें लगवा दीं और मुनादी करवा दी कि महल को चारों ओर से घेर लिया गया है।

महल से रानी के सैनिकों के झुंड के झुंड बाहर निकल पड़े और थैकरे की फौजों पर टूट पड़े। थैकरे की हमलावरी आवाज़ जैसे दब गई। कंपनी के सैकड़ों सैनिक मारे गए जिनमे दो महत्वपूर्ण कप्तान भी थे–ब्लैक और डिप्टन। थैकरे हताश हो गया और उसने अपनी पूरी ताकत से महल में घुसने की कोशिश की। रानी चेनम्मा इस सारे युद्ध का संचालन अपने महल की छत से कर रही थी। जब उसने थैकरे को महल की ओर बढ़ते देखा तो उसने अपने एक अधिकारी को संकेत से उसकी ओर इशारा कर दिया। बिजली की गति से एक गोली दनदनाती हुई आई और थैकरे के आर-पार निकल गई। थैकरे मर गया और अपने घोड़े से नीचे आ गिरा। थैकरे बहुत घमंडी था। वह चाहता था कि इतिहास उसे एक विजेता के रूप में याद करे।

कंपनी की फौज के बहुत-से अधिकारियों को पकड़कर बंदी बना लिया गया। कंपनी के बहुत-से सैनिक मारे गए और अनेक भाग खड़े हुए। रानी चेनम्मा आमने-सामने की इस भिड़न्त में जीत गई थी।

कंपनी के उच्च अधिकारियों ने जब इस हार की खबर सुनी तो वे भौंचक्के रह गए। वे एक छोटी-सी रियासत की रानी से हार जाने के कारण खिसिया गए थे। भारत के विभिन्न हिस्सों में उनकी फौजें बिखरी हुई थीं। उन्होंने अपनी पूरी फौज इकट्ठी करके कित्तूर पर चढ़ाई करने के लिए भेज दी।



लेकिन इन फौजों ने महल पर तत्काल हमला नहीं बोला। उनकी फौज के बहुत-से लोग महल में बंदी थे। (बाद में बंदियों ने बताया कि जेल में उनके साथ बड़ी सज्जनता और सहानुभूति से व्यवहार किया गया था।) इन फौजों को डर था कि यदि महल पर हमला कर दिया गया तो उनके अपने बहुत से बंदी-साथी मारे जा सकते है।

इन फौजो ने एक कपट भरी चाल चली। उन्होंने रानी के प्रति अपनी इज्ज़त प्रकट करते हुए उसे भरोसा दिलाया कि अगर उनके बंदी-साथियों को छोड़ दिया जाए तो वे रानी से शांति का समझौता करने के लिए तैयार हो जाएँगे। रानी चेनम्मा ने उनके प्रस्ताव पर भरोसा करके सारे बंदियों को छोड़ दिया। लेकिन जैसे ही वे बंदी लोग अपने साथियो के पास पहुँचे, सबने मिलकर महल पर हमला बोल दिया।

रानी के सैनिक बड़ी बहादुरी से लड़े। लेकिन रानी की फौजों के मुकाबले कंपनी की फौजों के पास अधिक हथियार थे और अब उनकी संख्या भी काफी हो गई थी। कंपनी की फौजों ने रानी के अस्त्र-शस्त्रों के भंडारों को नष्ट कर दिया। कंपनी की फौजों ने बड़े सुनियोजित और सुव्यवस्थित तरीके से इन्हें नष्ट किया। इन भंडारों से धू-धू कर आग की लपटें उठने लगीं। रानी के सैनिक हिम्मत हार गए और अधिक समय तक लड़ाई जारी नहीं रख सके। रानी चेनम्मा को बंदी बना लिया गया। सन् 1829 में रानी चेनम्मा ने बेलहोंगल के किले में एक बंदी के रूप में ही अपना शरीर छोड़ा।

आज बेलगाँव में रानी चेनम्मा की एक जीती-जागती सी प्रतिमा है। हालांकि रानी चेनम्मा एक छोटे-से राज्य की ही रानी थी, लेकिन वे जिस उद्देश्य के लिए लड़ी, वह न्यायपूर्ण था। घोड़े की पीठ पर सवार रानी चेनम्मा की मूर्ति को देखकर हमें बरबस झांसी की रानी की याद आ जाती है। ध्यान देने की बात है कि रानी चेनम्मा झांसी की रानी से तीस साल पहले ही यह सब कर चुकी थी।



3

[illegible]

"बिजली की गति से हमला करनेवाला क्या वह नौजवान मारा गया जिसने हमारे कप्तान और बहुत-से सैनिकों को आज हताहत कर दिया था? वह बिजली की चकाचौंध की तरह हमारी सुरक्षा-पंक्ति में घुस आया था और हमारे सैनिक ऐसे धडाधड़ मरकर गिरने लगे थे मानो उन्हें बिजली के तार छू गए हों।"

ग्वालियर के पास हुए पूरे दिन के युद्ध के बाद अंग्रेज फौज के सिपाही पास में ही कहीं अपने कैंप मे रात को आराम कर रहे थे। तभी एक थके-मांदे अंग्रेज सैनिक ने अपने साथी से यह बात पूछी थी। यह सन् 1858 ई. की बात है।

दूसरा साथी हँसकर बोला– "भाई! वह पुरुष नहीं, स्त्री है लेकिन है एक बहादुर 'मर्द' की तरह। मैंने आज तक ऐसी स्त्री देखी ही नहीं। उसका नाम झाँसी की रानी लक्ष्मीबाई है।"

फ्रांस को आजाद करानेवाली जॉन आफ आर्क को छोड़कर संसार के समूचे इतिहास मे हमें ऐसा दूसरा कोई स्त्री-चरित्र दिखाई नहीं पड़ता। लक्ष्मीबाई की कुलीनता, शालीनता, साहस और नेतृत्व-शक्ति की तुलना केवल जॉन आफ आर्क से ही की जा सकती है।

जॉन की तरह लक्ष्मीबाई भी एक साधारण परिवार में ही पैदा हुई थी। जब ज्योतिषियों ने लक्ष्मीबाई की जन्म-कुंडली देखी थी तो भविष्यवाणी की थी कि इस लडकी में एक महान नेता के गुण होंगे। बड़ी होने पर उसका विवाह झाँसी के राजा गंगाधर राव से हो गया।

अभी लक्ष्मीबाई मुश्किल से अठारह साल की ही हो पाई होगी कि राजा चल बसे। रानी ने हिम्मत से काम लिया और शासन की बागडोर स्वयं सँभाल ली। रानी जिस तरह राज-काज चलाती थी, एक आदर्श राजा ही उस तरह हकूमत चला सकता था। झाँसी की जनता के मन मे रानी के लिए अपार आदर, श्रद्धा और

सम्मान पैदा हो चला था।

आपको पता ही है, इस समय तक भारत में ईस्ट इंडिया नामक एक व्यापारिक संस्था अपनी हकूमत स्थापित कर चुकी थी। लेकिन भारत के बहुत से हिस्से अभी भी ऐसे थे जहाँ स्थानीय राजाओं का ही राज्य था। कंपनी को यह बात फूटी आँख नहीं सुहाती थी। कंपनी सदा इस ताक में रहती थी कि कोई-न-कोई बहाना गढ़कर इन राज्यों के राजाओं के विशेष अधिकारों को हड़प लिया जाए।

कंपनी की सरकार ने एक नियम बना डाला कि अगर कोई राजा निस्संतान मर जाएगा तो उसके राज्य और संपत्ति पर कंपनी का अधिकार अपने आप हो जाएगा। इस नियम के विपरीत भारत में एक परंपरा बहुत समय पहले से चली आ रही थी। इस भारतीय परंपरा के अनुसार यदि किसी व्यक्ति के संतान न हो तो उसे संतान गोद लेने का अधिकार था। इसी परंपरा के अनुसार लक्ष्मीबाई ने भी एक पुत्र गोद ले लिया था और उस पुत्र की ओर से झाँसी पर शासन कर रही थी। लेकिन कंपनी को तो बहाना चाहिए था। कंपनी ने रानी के इस अधिकार को स्वीकार नहीं किया कि वह किसी बच्चे को पुत्र के रूप में गोद लेकर उसकी ओर से शासन कार्य चला सकती है।

इसी बहाने अंग्रेजों ने झाँसी पर कब्जा करने के लिए अपनी फौजें भेज दीं।

रानी उत्तेजित हो उठी। क्रुद्ध रानी का कहना था "आखिर इन विदेशियों ने यह अधिकार कैसे ले लिया है कि वे यहाँ के खुदमुख्तियार राजाओं पर अपने आपको लादते चले जाएँ। अगर वे ऐसी जुर्रत दिखा रहे हैं तो उन्हें अपने मन की करने दीजिए, मुझ पर इसका कोई असर नहीं पड़ता।" रानी ने अपनी फौजों को आदेश दिया कि वे कंपनी के कैंपों पर धावा बोल दें। रानी की फौजों ने अंग्रेज सेनाओं की जमकर धुनाई की और उन्हें पीछे धकेल दिया। राज्य में फिर एक बार शांति स्थापित हो गई और रानी का राजकाज ठीक तरह से चलने लगा। इस तरह समय गुजरता गया।

रानी दूध जैसी सफेद पोशाक पहना करती थी। जब रानी अपने मंत्रियों और कमांडरों के सामने आती तो ये लोग उसके प्रति अपने हृदय का आदर प्रकट करने के लिए इस तरह झुककर प्रणाम करते थे मानो भक्त लोग अपने इष्ट-देवता के सामने अपने-अपने शीश नवा रहे हों। रानी उनसे जो कुछ कहती थी उसे सुनकर वे प्रेरणा से भर उठते थे। रानी को देखकर उनकी निगाहें हिम्मत से चमक उठती थीं।

लेकिन अंग्रेज लोग अपनी हार को भुला नहीं पाए थे। वे बदले की भावना से भीतर ही भीतर तिलमिला रहे

थे और झाँसी पर हमला करने के लिए उचित मौके की तलाश में थे।

उन दिनों अंग्रेज फौज़ में एक सर ह्यू रोज़ नामक जनरल था। रण-कौशल में उसे सबसे योग्य और चतुर जनरल माना जाता था। सन् 1858 ई. के जनवरी के महीने में सर ह्यू रोज़ के नेतृत्व में दो विशाल रेजीमेंट बनाई गईं। इन रेजीमेंटों ने झाँसी पर दो ओर से हमला बोल दिया। इन रेजीमेंटों के पास बढ़िया से बढ़िया तोपें और दूरबीनें थीं जिनकी सहायता से वे लोग बहुत दूर से भी अपना निशाना साधकर ठीक स्थान पर मार कर सकते थे। ये लोग झाँसी में घुस आए। झाँसी के किले में बड़े-बड़े जलाशय बने हुए थे। किले में गोले-बारूद के बड़े-बड़े भंडार भी थे। अंग्रेज फौजों ने सबसे पहले इन्हें ही नष्ट करने की कोशिश की। हालांकि जिस प्रकार की तोपें झाँसी की सेनाओं के पास थीं वे अंग्रेज सेनाओं की तोपों के मुकाबले में घटिया किस्म की थीं, लेकिन जो सैनिक इन तोपों को चला रहे थे उनका मनोबल, उनकी वीरता और उनकी निष्ठा अंग्रेज फौजों से कहीं अधिक बढ़ी-चढ़ी थी। कई दिनों तक लड़ाई चलती रही लेकिन अंग्रेज सैनिक आगे नहीं बढ़ सके। दोनों कैंपों में रोज सैकड़ों लोग मारे जाते।

भारत की जनता में इस समय तक ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के जुल्मों के खिलाफ काफी रोष पैदा हो चुका था। इतना ही नहीं, लोगों ने इनका मुकाबला करने के लिए हथियार भी उठा लिए थे। विदेशियों के खिलाफ लोगों के दिलों में एक बड़ी भारी क्रांति की भावना सुगबुगा रही थी, हालाँकि उस समय इसे सैनिक सिपाहियों का गदर कहा गया था। कंपनी की फौजों में भारतीय सैनिक भी हुआ करते थे। दरअसल इस क्रांति की शुरुआत से पहले इन भारतीय सैनिकों के कई गुटों ने अंग्रेज सरकार के खिलाफ विद्रोह का बिगुल बजा दिया था। तांत्या टोपे इस विद्रोह के महान नायक थे। वे रानी की सहायता करने के लिए अपने पच्चीस हज़ार सैनिकों के साथ झाँसी की तरफ बढ़ चले। लेकिन कभी-कभी ऐसा होता है कि कार्य जिस भावना से शुरू किया जाता है, उसका उलटा परिणाम सामने आता है। दुर्भाग्यवश ऐसा ही हुआ। डर के मारे अंग्रेजों की हिम्मत टूट गई और वे रानी के किले की ओर भागे। किले की रक्षा के लिए जो बहादुर शूरवीर सैनिक वहाँ तैनात थे उन्होंने मार-काट शुरू कर दी। महल के पिछवाड़े कुछ गुप्त दरवाजे भी थे। ऐसा लगता है कि महल के किसी एक गद्दार रक्षक ने अंग्रेज सैनिकों को भीतर घुसने देने के लिए कोई दरवाजा खोल दिया और ये लोग धड़ाधड़ भीतर घुस आए। झाँसी के ही किसी जासूस ने दरवाजा खोलने के लिए इस सैनिक को एक मोटी रकम घूस के रूप में थमा दी थी।

सन्नाटे की रात थी, अंधेरा ही अंधेरा था। रानी ने देखा, उसके महल में अंग्रेज सैनिक ज्वार-भाटे की तरह उमड़े चले आ रहे हैं। रानी अपनी सफेद पोशाक में ही थी। रानी ने जल्दी से अपने पुत्र को अपनी पीठ पर

कसा और किले से बच निकली। उसके साथ उसके कुछ विश्वासपात्र अंगरक्षक भी थे।

रानी कालपी की ओर बढ़ चली। झाँसी से कालपी काफी दूर है। कभी घोड़े पर तो कभी हाथी पर – इस तरह रानी ने अपना यह सफर पूरा किया। उन दिनों नाना साहब का नाम बहुत मशहूर था। (नाना साहब के बारे में हम आगे पढ़ेंगे।) नाना साहब के भानजे और तांत्या टोपे भी रानी के साथ हो लिए। जब अंग्रेज फौजों को यह सूचना मिली तो वे भी रानी का पीछा करते हुए वहाँ जा पहुँचीं। इस भाग-दौड़ के बीच जब भी रानी को समय और अवसर मिलता, वह अन्य राजाओं से संपर्क स्थापित करके उन्हें अंग्रेजों के विरुद्ध उठ खड़ा होने की प्रेरणा देती रहती। यही कारण था कि अंग्रेज अब रानी को अपना अव्वल नंबर का शत्रु मानने लगे थे।

रानी और अंग्रेजों की फौजों में घमासान लड़ाइयाँ हुईं। रानी सदा अपनी फौजों के आगे ही रहती। शत्रुओं की तोपें आग उगल रही थीं। बंदूकें गोलियाँ बरसा रही थीं। लेकिन रानी की अद्भुत हिम्मत देखिए कि वह अपने हाथ में सिर्फ तलवार लिए शत्रुओं की फौजों में घुस जाती और जबरदस्त मारकाट मचा देती। रानी का ऐसा अद्भुत साहस देखकर अंग्रेज लोग भी दाँतों तले अँगुली दबा लेते थे। अंग्रेजों ने बड़ी चतुराई से



रानी की घेराबंदी की थी। लेकिन इस सबसे स्वयं को बड़ी चतुराई और हिम्मत से बचाते हुए वह अंग्रेज फौजों पर हमले-पर-हमले करती रही। रानी की जबरदस्त मारकाट के सामने कई बार अंग्रेज फौजों को पीछे हटने के लिए विवश होना पड़ा।

लड़ते-लड़ते भागते-भागते रानी ग्वालियर आ पहुँची। ग्वालियर के राजा अंग्रेजों के पक्ष में थे। राजा अपना किला छोड़ गए। उनकी फौजों ने रानी और उसके दो देशभक्त साथी-मित्रों–तांत्या टोपे और राव साहब के सामने हथियार डाल दिए।

अब ग्वालियर की फौज भी इन देशभक्त लोगों के साथ थी। अब वे लोग भी समझ गए थे कि कंपनी के हमलों से देश को बचाना है। और किसी बात से अंग्रेज इतनी हिम्मत नहीं हारे थे, लेकिन अब झाँसी और ग्वालियर की फौजें एक होकर उनसे लड़ने लगीं तो उनका मनोबल टूट चला। उस समय के ब्रिटिश गवर्नर जनरल को जब इस घटना का पता चला तो उसने सर ह्यू रोज़ को कड़े शब्दों में लिखा कि या तो वह ग्वालियर के किले पर दुबारा अपना कब्जा करे या इंग्लैंड लौटने के लिए अपना बोरिया-बिस्तर समेट ले।

लाचार अंग्रेज फौज ने अपनी सारी शक्ति और साधन एकत्रित करके अपनी पूरी ताकत से ग्वालियर के विद्रोहियों पर हमला बोल दिया।

पूरे दिन घमासान युद्ध होता रहा। रानी घंटों लड़ी। रानी की मार से आहत अंग्रेज फौजों को कई बार तो अपने सिर पर पाँव रखकर पीछे भागना पड़ा। अंग्रेज फौज रानी के सामने टिक नहीं पा रही थी, लेकिन दोपहर के बाद अंग्रेजों की फौज में एक और नई रेजीमेंट आ जुड़ी। इससे उनकी शक्ति बढ़ गई। रानी और उसके साथी-सहयोगी लड़ते-लड़ते थककर चूर हो गए थे। इसके अलावा तभी एक और दुर्घटना हो गई। रानी का पुराना घोड़ा, जो लड़ाई के मैदान में रानी का हर इशारा समझता था, दम तोड़ चुका था। अब रानी के पास जो नया घोड़ा था उसे लड़ाई के मैदान का कोई तजुर्बा नहीं था।

इन सारी विवशताओं के कारण उस दिन रानी ने फैसला किया कि जैसे भी हो, आज की लड़ाई टाल दी जाए। लेकिन शत्रु बहुत खूँख्वार हो उठा था और रानी की जान के पीछे हाथ धोकर पड़ गया था। हालाँकि रानी पीछे हट रही थी, लेकिन अपने पीछे आती अंग्रेज फौजों से भी उन्हे भिड़ना पड़ जाता था।

शाम का धुँधलका छाने लगा था। रानी चाहती तो इसका लाभ उठाकर अपने को बचाकर निकल सकती थी।





लेकिन रानी के साथ एक स्त्री और भी थी। यह स्त्री भी पुरुष-वेश में थी और रानी के लिए सदा से वफादार रही थी। उसने पूरे युद्ध में रानी का साथ दिया था और इस समय उसके जानलेवा चोटें आई हुई थीं। जब रानी ने उस शत्रु सैनिक को देखा जो उस स्त्री पर हमला कर रहा था तो रानी पलभर को ठिठकी और तत्काल उसे काट डाला। रानी की सखी के प्राण निकलते जा रहे थे। रानी ने उस निढाल होती जा रही अपनी सखी को अपनी बाहों में समोने की कोशिश की। तभी शत्रु के कुछ और सिपाही वहाँ आ पहुँचे और उन्होंने रानी को घेर लिया। वे किसी कीमत पर रानी को जिंदा नहीं छोड़ना चाहते थे। ऐसे समय में भी रानी ने उन शत्रु सैनिकों से डटकर लोहा लिया और उनमें से बहुतों को या तो मार डाला या उनका अंग-भंग कर दिया। इससे पहले कि रानी कभी न उठने के लिए गिर पड़ती, शत्रु सैनिक फिर एक बार भाग खड़े हुए।

अब तक शत्रु सैनिकों को यह ज्ञात नहीं था कि यही रानी लक्ष्मीबाई है। यदि उन्हें इस बात का पता चल गया होता तो वे उसकी लाश को जरूर ही उठा ले जाते और अपने साथियों के बीच अपनी जीत की शेखी बघारते फिरते। दरअसल उन्हें धोखा हो गया कि जिससे वे लड़ रहे हैं वह रानी की फौज का कोई बहादुर कमांडर है।

रानी के साथ उसके कुछ वफादार सैनिक भी थे। वे रानी को उठाकर पास की एक कुटिया में ले गए। रानी का दम निकलता जा रहा था। रानी मद्धिम-सी आवाज़ में बुदबुदायी– मेरे शरीर को जल्दी-से-जल्दी जला डालो। मैं नहीं चाहती कि शत्रु इसे छू भी सकें।

तब तक अंग्रेजों को भी पता चल चुका था कि रानी अब नहीं रही। वे खुशी के मारे उछलने लगे और रानी की लाश की तलाश में निकल पड़े। किन्तु अब लेजाने को बचा ही क्या था? दो मुट्ठी राख।

अब रानी सदा-सदा के लिए देश के स्वतंत्रता-प्रेमियों के लिए प्रेरणा का अजस्र-स्रोत बन चुकी थी। अब रानी केवल एक किस्सा हो गई थी जो कभी खत्म नहीं होगा।

जवाहर लाल नेहरू ने रानी लक्ष्मीबाई के बारे में लिखते हुए कहा है:

''झाँसी की रानी लक्ष्मीबाई का नाम सबसे ऊपर आता है और वह एक लोकप्रिय यादगार के रूप में हमारे सामने है। बीस बरस की उम्र में ही यह लड़की लड़ते-लड़ते मारी गई। जो ब्रिटिश जनरल उनके खिलाफ युद्ध-संचालन कर रहा था उसने भी रानी को एक ''सर्वश्रेष्ठ और सबसे बहादुर'' चरित्र के रूप में स्वीकार किया था।''

4

[illegible]

बरसों पहले की बात है। तब मैं छोटा ही था। उन दिनों मैंने एक किस्सा पढ़ा था। यह किस्सा एक यात्री ने लिखा था। इस किस्से को पढ़कर मेरे रोंगटे खड़े हो गए थे।

हिमालय की तराई में कोई एकांत बंगला था। दिन भर का थका-मांदा एक यात्री यहाँ आराम कर रहा था।

साँझ होने को आ रही थी, चारों ओर झीना-सा आलोक फैला हुआ था। पर्वतों पर ऊँचे-ऊँचे देवदार के वृक्ष सरसरा रहे थे। इन घने पेड़ों के झुरमुटों की सघन छाया से छन-छनकर कोहरा इधर-उधर छितराता जा रहा था। यात्री ने अपने को गरमाने के लिए आग जला ली थी। तभी एक अजनबी वृद्ध महाशय वहाँ आ गए। उनकी दाढ़ी के सफेद बाल बरफ की तरह धवल थे जिनमें उनकी आँखे छोटे-छोटे सितारों की तरह चमक रही थीं।

ये महाशय सन् 1857 ई. के सैनिक गदर के दिलचस्प किस्से सुनाने लगे। बातों-बातों में बहुत समय बीत गया। सुननेवाला मंत्रमुग्ध होकर ये किस्से सुनता रहा। अंत में उसने सवाल किया– "लेकिन आपको यह सब कैसे मालूम है?"

वृद्ध महाशय चल पड़ने के लिए उठ खड़े हुए और बुदबुदाए– "क्यों? मैंने इन घटनाओं को स्वयं जिया है। क्या तुमने नाना साहब के बारे में नहीं सुना?" यात्री उन्हें जाते हुए देखता रहा। धीरे-धीरे वृद्ध महाशय अंधेरे में खो गए।

जिस किसी ने भी इस सैनिक गदर के बारे में पढ़ा होगा उसने नाना साहब के किस्से जरूर पढ़े होंगे। वे पेशवा बाजीराव (द्वितीय) के गोद लिए हुए पुत्र थे। पेशवा लोग किसी समय मराठा शासक हुआ करते थे और इनके पूर्वज शिवाजी महान के दरबार में मंत्री हुआ करते थे।





यह किस्सा उन दिनों का है जब ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी का भारत में राज था। ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी ने फैसला कर लिया था कि पेशवा को पुत्र गोद लेने का कोई अधिकार न दिया जाए। क्यों? दरअसल ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी उनका राज हड़प चुकी थी और इसके बदले कंपनी उन्हें आठ लाख रुपए हर साल दिया करती थी। उन दिनों के हिसाब से यह रकम चुकाना कंपनी के लिए बहुत भारी पड़ता था और वे समझते थे कि पेशवा को पुत्र गोद लेने के अधिकार से वंचित करके कंपनी यह रकम बचा सकती है। इसलिए कंपनी ने एलान कर दिया कि नाना साहब बाजीराव के उत्तराधिकारी नहीं हो सकते। कंपनी ने उन्हें पेशवा मानने से इंकार कर दिया।

1857 की क्रांति का समय आ पहुँचा। नाना साहब के हृदय में अपनी मातृभूमि के लिए अगाध प्रेम था और वे अपने अद्भुत साहस के लिए सुविख्यात थे। कानपुर में जिन सैनिकों ने ब्रिटिश राज के खिलाफ विद्रोह का बिगुल बजा दिया था उन्होंने नाना जी से अनुरोध किया कि वे उनके नेता बन जाएँ। नाना साहब तो जैसे इसके लिए तैयार ही बैठे थे। उन्होंने पेशवा के रूप में राजगद्दी सँभाल ली और अपने सिपाहियों को आदेश दिया कि वे ईस्ट इडिया कंपनी के लोगों को शहर से बाहर निकाल भगाएँ।

ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के सामने चुनौती आ खड़ी हुई। कंपनी ने एक योग्य सेनापति के अधीन अपनी फौजें इकट्ठी करके उस सेनापति को कानपुर पर धावा बोलने का आदेश दे दिया। लेकिन नाना साहब ने कंपनी की फौजों के हमले को नाकामयाब कर दिखाया। नाना कंपनी की फौजों से दो बरस तक कानपुर में लड़ते रहे। हालाँकि अवध और कालपी की लड़ाइयों के दौरान अंग्रेजों ने कानपुर भी जीत लिया था और परिस्थितियाँ हर तरह से नाना के विपरीत थीं, लेकिन इसके बावजूद उनके उत्साह और साहस मे तनिक भी कमी नहीं आई। देश में अब भी बहुत-से शक्तिशाली राजा-महाराजा थे। अगर इन राजे-रजवाड़ों ने नाना साहब और झाँसी की रानी का साथ दिया होता तो इन लोगो ने भारत के इतिहास का रुख ही बदल दिया होता। लेकिन इन राजे-रजवाड़ों में बहुत-से तो अंग्रेजों के जी-हजूर बन चुके थे। ये लोग तो उलटे इन साहसी नेताओं का विरोध करने पर तुले हुए थे।

नाना साहब अकेले पड़ गए। विवश होकर वे चोरी-छिपे नेपाल चले गए। बहुत समय तक अंग्रेज लोग उन्हें गिरफ्तार करने की कोशिशें करते रहे और नानाजी उनसे बचते हुए इधर-उधर भागते-फिरते रहे। नानाजी ने अपने शत्रुओं को जो अंतिम पत्र लिखा था उसमें उन्होंने साफ-साफ कहा था– "आपको भारत पर जबरन कब्ज़ा बनाए रखने का कोई अधिकार नहीं है और न ही आपको यह अधिकार है कि मुझे कानूनी सुरक्षा से वंचित कर दिया जाए। आपको आखिर भारत पर हकूमत करने का अधिकार किसने दिया

है ? आप लोग तो यहाँ आकर राजा बन बैठे हैं और हम लोग अपने ही देश मे चोरों की तरह जी रहे हैं।"

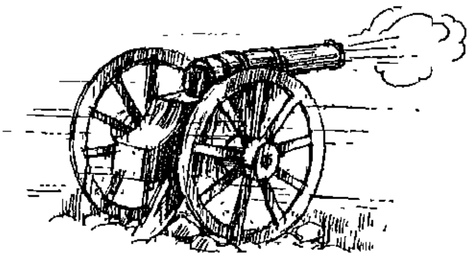
अपने जासूसों से अंग्रेजों को सूचना मिली कि नाना साहब को जंगलों मे एक चीते ने मार डाला है। लेकिन कंपनी के अधिकारियों को इस बात पर यकीन नहीं आया। उन्हें शक था कि नाना भिखारी के रूप मे यहीं-कहीं भटक रहे हैं।

कंपनी के अधिकारियों ने तमाम भिखारियों और कंगलों को गिरफ्तार करना शुरू कर दिया। हर अफ़सर हर भिखारी पर शक करता कि वही नाना है। इस तरह हर अफसर अपने आप को नाना को गिरफ्तार कर लेने वाला समझता और वे लोग आपस में होड़ लगाने लगते कि सच्चे नाना को मैंने गिरफ्तार किया है। कंपनी की सरकार को कहीं से यह सूचना मिली कि नाना साहब रूसी फौजों के बलबूते पर भारत पर हमला करनेवाले हैं। बस, फिर क्या था। कंपनी की सरकार में हड़कंप मच गया।

आज तक किसी को यह नहीं पता चल सका है कि जिन जासूसों ने नाना की मृत्यु की सूचना दी थी वह खबर सही थी या गलत। इतिहास के पन्नों में यह बात एक रहस्य बनकर रह गई है। उन दिनों यह भी सुना जाता था कि नेपाल के जंगलों के एक गाँव में नाना की पत्नी अकेली रहा करती थी। नाना की पत्नी ने विधवाओं की पोशाक कभी नही पहनी। लोगो मे यह धारणा फैली हुई थी कि गाँव में जब कभी कोई उत्सव-त्यौहार हुआ करता था तो नाना चोरी-छिपे दबे पाँव आते और अपनी पत्नी से मिलकर चले जाते।

नाना के किस्से भारत से बाहर भी फैलने लगे थे। बहुत-से अंग्रेज लेखकों ने नाना साहब के बारे में लिखने की कोशिश की है और उन्हें एक दुष्ट व्यक्ति के रूप में दिखाने का प्रयास किया है। ज्यूल्स वर्नेस के किसी उपन्यास में नाना साहब का जिक्र आया है। इसमें बताया गया है कि बहुत समय तक इधर-उधर भटकने के बाद नाना भारत में एक भिखारी की तरह वापस लौटे।

भारत में लोगों का विश्वास है कि नाना साहब ने लंबी उम्र पाई थी। कुछ लोगों ने तो यहाँ तक कहा है कि वे नाना साहब से मिला भी करते थे।



5

बात सन् 1858 के नवंबर महीने की है। कानपुर के लोग कुछ अंदाज नहीं लगा पा रहे थे कि अंग्रेज सैनिक आख़िर कानपुर की ओर ताबड़तोड़ क्यों बढ़े चले आ रहे हैं। आखिर इन सैनिकों का इरादा क्या है? क्या ये शहर पर कब्ज़ा करना चाहते हैं? लेकिन जीतने के हौसले के साथ जो फौज हमला करती है उसके सिपाहियों के चेहरों पर इतनी मायूसी तो होती नहीं। शहरी जनता इनका मुकाबला भी नहीं कर रही। कहीं किसी तरह की लड़ाई भी नहीं होती दिखाई दे रही। आखिर मामला क्या है? अगर इसे अंग्रेज लोगों की जीत कहा जाए तो वे तो जीत-ही-जीत रहे हैं। फिर इस जीत की खुशी की कोई चमक इनके चेहरों पर क्यों नहीं झलक रही? इन सब सिपाहियों के चेहरे क्यों लटके हुए हैं? शहर के लोग दाँतों तले अँगुली दबाए सब कुछ देखते जा रहे हैं।

इन सब सवालों का आखिर क्या जवाब हो सकता है? – ज़रा सोचिए। ठहरिए, हम ही आपको बताते हैं। बात उन दिनों की है जब कानपुर शहर इतना बड़ा शहर नहीं था जितना कि आज है। शहर की सीमाओं पर खेत और जंगल थे उन दिनों। इन जंगलों में भारतीय विद्रोही छिपे रहते थे। यहाँ से कभी तो तोपगोलों के धाँय-धाँय चलने की आवाज़ें सनसनाती और कभी ज़ोर-ज़ोर के ठहाकों की आवाज़ें। यही कारण था कि अंग्रेज-फौज शहर की ओर भागी चली आ रही थी। दरअसल कानपुर शहर का कब्जा करने का इनका कोई इरादा था भी नहीं। ऐसा लग रहा था जैसे इन्हें कोई पीछे से खदेड़ रहा हो और ये होशोहवास गँवाकर शहर की ओर भागे चले आ रहे हों। भारतीय विद्रोहियों की फौजें इन ब्रिटिशसैनिकों के पीछे कई दिनों से पड़ी हुई थी। ये विद्रोही भी अजीब तरह के लोग थे। ये लोग न तो अपनी पूरी ताकत से अंग्रेज फौजों पर हमला ही कर रहे थे और न उन्हें चैन से रहने ही दे रहे थे। अंग्रेज सैनिकों में डर पैदा करने के लिए ये विद्रोही लोग उन पर ठहर-ठहरकर हमला करते थे। विद्रोही लोग कभी-कभार अंग्रेज सैनिको पर गोलियाँ चला देते, कभी उन पर तीर छोड़ने लगते। जब मौका मिलता, वे इन फौजी दस्तों पर झपट भी पड़ते थे।

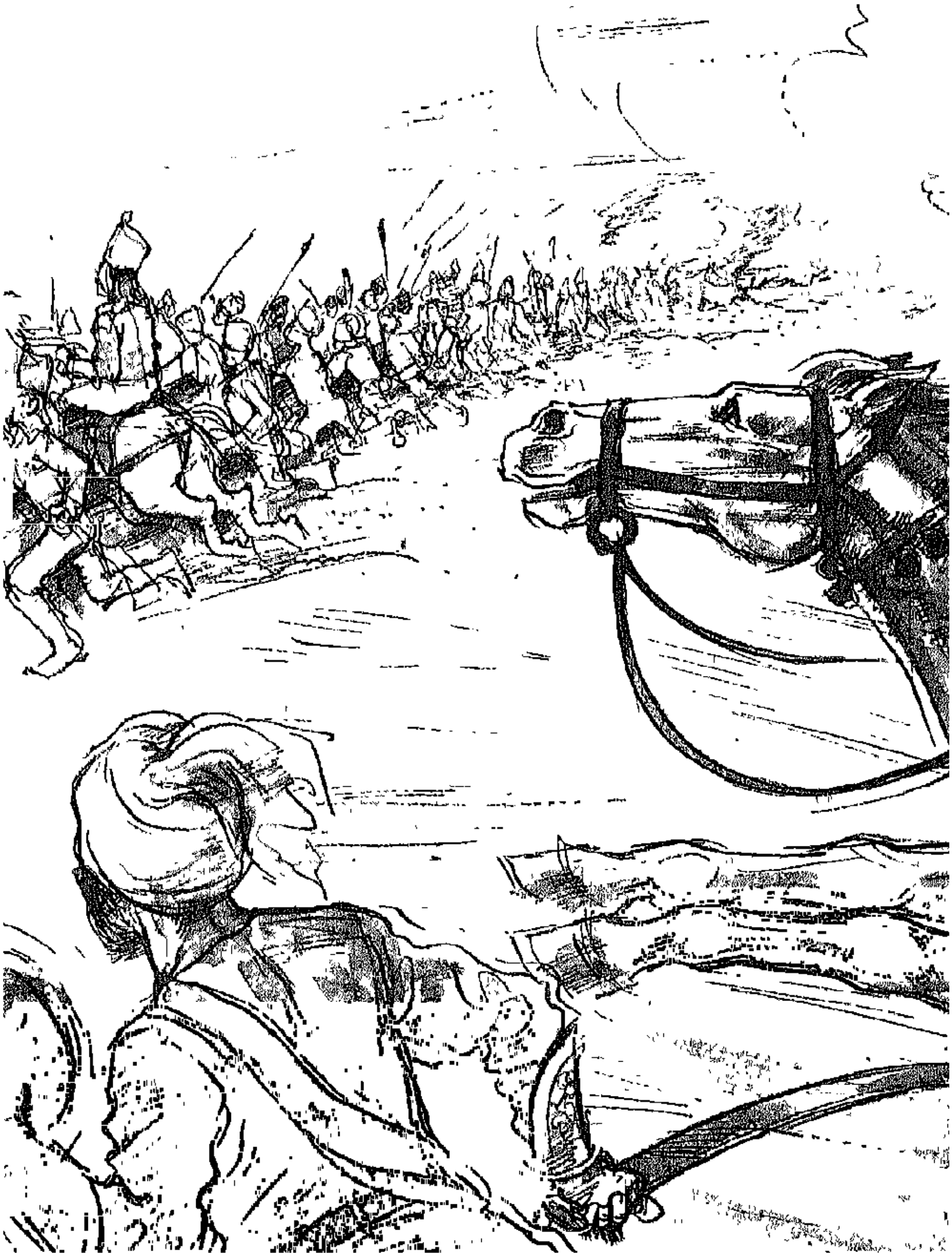
रात-बिरात इन लोगों की डरावनी चीख़ों की आवाज़ें अंग्रेज सैनिकों को डरा देतीं। बस, इतनी-सी बात थी।

कंपनी की फौज बुरी तरह सहम गई थी। डर के मारे उन्हें लगने लगा था कि अब भलाई इसी में है कि अपने मोर्चों के ठिकानों को छोड़कर कहीं भाग लिया जाए। अपनी-अपनी जान तो सभी को प्यारी होती है। इसलिए ये लोग भी सिर पर पाँव रखकर शहर की ओर भागे चले आ रहे थे। अब भारतीय विद्रोहियों के सामने उचित अवसर था कि ये लोग उन पर हमला बोल दें। अंग्रेज़ी फौज की टुकड़ियाँ अपनी-अपनी जान बचाने के लिए इधर-उधर भागती फिर रही थीं। ये टुकड़ियाँ कहीं इकट्ठी न हो जाएँ, इसलिए भारतीय विद्रोहियों ने इन पर अपनी तोपों से आग बरसाते गोले छोड़ने शुरू कर दिए। अंग्रेज़ सैनिक करते भी तो क्या करते, युद्ध की खुली चुनौती थी सामने। अंग्रेज़ फौजों की कमान जनरल वाइंधम के हाथों में थी। वाइंधम बहुत कुशल और अनुभवी जनरल था। लेकिन वाइंधम की जनरली और उसकी फौजों की बहादुरी धरी-की-धरी रह गई।

क्या आप जानते हैं कि भारतीय विद्रोहियों की कमान कैसे आदमी के हाथों में थी। न तो यह आदमी किसी लड़ाकू कौम में ही पैदा हुआ था और न ही इस आदमी को कभी युद्ध करने की ट्रेनिंग ही मिली थी। जाति की दृष्टि से इस आदमी का जन्म ब्राह्मण घराने में हुआ था। इस ब्राह्मण का नाम तांत्या टोपे था। टोपे नाना साहब के दरबार में एक मामूली-सा क्लर्क था।

यह 1857 का साल था, अंग्रेज़ सरकार के खिलाफ विद्रोह का साल। तांत्या टोपे की इच्छा-शक्ति बहुत दृढ़ थी। उनके मन में अपनी मातृभूमि के प्रति गहन प्रेम और सम्मान की भावना थी। वे अद्भुत स्वामिभक्त भी थे। उनके मन मे अपने स्वामी के प्रति अटूट निष्ठा थी। चारों ओर विद्रोह का माहौल पहले से था ही। ऐसे समय में तांत्या टोपे के ये गुण अपने आप प्रकट हो उठे। अपने इन्हीं गुणों के कारण तांत्या टोपे एक बहादुर सिपाही और योग्य सेनापति बन सके थे। उनके हाथों में बीस हज़ार सैनिकों की कमान थी। इतनी बड़ी फौज को तांत्या टोपे ने बड़ी कुशलतापूर्वक संगठित कर लिया था। तांत्या टोपे और उनकी फौज़ ने अंग्रेजों के एक बार तो छक्के ही छुड़ा दिए थे – युद्ध में। तांत्या के रणकौशल से प्रभावित होकर अंग्रेज लोग भी एक बार दाँतों तले अँगुली दबा गए। बाद में अंग्रेजों ने भी यह बात स्वीकार की कि तांत्या टोपे एक असाधारण नेता थे।

जब अंग्रेज़ी फौजें शहर में घुस आईं तो आप जानते हैं, क्या हुआ? उस दिन शहर में घमासान लड़ाई हुई और यह लड़ाई सारे दिन चलती रही। सूरज छिपने के साथ ही युद्ध भी रुक गया। इस रात एक अंग्रेज़





अफ़सर ने अपने मित्र को लिखा था – आज की लड़ाई जिस तरह लड़ी गई उसके बारे में पढ़कर तुम दंग रह जाओगे। अंग्रेज़ लोग अपनी बहादुरी की बड़ी डींग हाँका करते हैं और दूसरे लोग भी अंग्रेज़ों की बहादुरी की प्रशंसा करते हैं। इन्हें हमेशा यह विश्वास रहता है कि जिस उद्देश्य के लिए ये लड़ रहे हैं वह बहुत महान् है और इसीलिए इन्हें अपनी जीत पर बड़ा भरोसा रहता है। लेकिन आज मैं तुम्हें एक बात बताता हूँ जिस पर तुम शायद भरोसा भी न कर सको। कानपुर के साधारण-से नगरवासियों ने अपने गुप्तचरों की सहायता से हमें इतनी बुरी तरह खदेड़ा है कि हमारा सारा अभिमान चूर-चूर हो गया है। यहाँ के लोगों ने आज हमारी सारी इज़्ज़त-प्रतिष्ठा धूल में मिला दी है। हमारे सारे कैंप और सारा साज-सामान आज इन लोगों ने नष्ट कर दिया है। शत्रु लोग हमारी सेना को 'फिरंगी' अर्थात् भगोड़ा कहने लगे हैं। चारों ओर हम फिरंगियों के तंबू उखड़े पड़े हैं। हमारे कैंपों के टूटे-फूटे सामान के अंबार-के-अंबार लग गए हैं। आज तो फिरंगियों में गज़ब की भगदड़ मच गई, भाई। थके-हारे फिरंगी अपने प्राण बचाने के लिए अपने टूटे-फूटे किटों के साथ अपनी-अपनी खाइयों-खंदकों की ओर बेतहाशा भागे चले जा रहे थे। जहाँ देखो, वहीं ऊँट, हाथी और घोड़े-ही-घोड़े नज़र आ रहे थे। आज जो कुछ हुआ है उसके पछतावे के दुख से हमारी छातियाँ धधक उठी हैं। हमारी सारी इज़्ज़त धूल में मिल गई है। (चार्ल्स बाल : **इंडियन म्यूटिनी**)

लेकिन टोपे के भाग्य में तो कुछ और ही बदा था। उन्होंने वाइंधम को तो कानपुर में धूल चटा दी लेकिन वाइंधम की करारी हार का बदला लेने के लिए लखनऊ से कौलिन कैंपबेल नामक सेनापति अपनी फौजों के साथ कानपुर इतनी जल्दी आ जाएगा, इसका टोपे को बिल्कुल भी अनुमान नहीं लग पाया था। उन दिनों कौलिन कैंपबेल भारत में अंग्रेज़ सैनिकों का सबसे बड़ा कमांडर था और लखनऊ मे विद्रोहियों को कुचलने में लगा हुआ था। टोपे की धारणा यह थी कि लखनऊ में विद्रोही लोग भीषण युद्ध कर रहे हैं और कैंपबेल को उन्हीं से निबटना भारी पड़ रहा है। हुआ यह था कि कैंपबेल अपने साथी वाइंधम की करारी पिटाई होने से बहुत उत्तेजित हो गया था और उसने अपनी सेनाओं का मुँह कानपुर की ओर मोड़ दिया और देखते-ही-देखते कानपुर आ पहुँचा।

कैंपबेल के सैनिक बहुत मँजे हुए लड़ाकू थे और इन सैनिकों के अफसर भी युद्ध-संचालन में बहुत निपुण थे। अगर टोपे को कानपुर में पाँव जमाने के लिए कुछ समय और मिल गया होता तो वह कैंपबेल को भी मज़ा चखा सकता था। लेकिन भाग्य की बात। अब तो कैंपबेल कानपुर आ ही चुका था।

अब कानपुर टोपे के काबू से बाहर की बात हो गया। टोपे कालपी लौट आए। उन्होंने भारत के सभी

छोटे-बड़े राजाओ और जमींदारों से अपील की– "मेरे स्वामी (नाना साहब) का उद्देश्य है, हिंदू और मुसलमान – दोनो की रक्षा करना। अपने इस महान उद्देश्य की प्राप्ति के लिए उन्होंने अपने जीवन की सारी सुख-सुविधाओं का त्याग कर दिया है। उन्होने पक्का फैसला कर लिया है कि वे शत्रुओं को नेस्त-नाबूद करके ही दम लेंगे। मेरे स्वामी का उद्देश्य आप लोगों के इलाकों पर कब्ज़ा करना नहीं है। उलटे वे तो इस बात के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे है कि आप लोगों के जो इलाके अंग्रेजों ने छीन लिए हैं वे सम्मानपूर्वक आपको वापस करवा दिए जाएँ······किन्तु इस कार्य को मैं पूरा कर सकूँ, इसके लिए मुझे आपके प्रोत्साहन और सहयोग की ज़रूरत है। अगर आप मुझे सहयोग दें तो मैं आपको विश्वास दिलाता हूँ कि भविष्य में हम भारतवासी सुख-शांति से अपना जीवन बिता सकेगे तथा चारों ओर जो अशांति फैली हुई है उसे खत्म करके हम अपने देश में फिर से चैन-अमन का राज्य कायम कर सकेंगे।"

तांत्या टोपे का प्रभाव दिनों-दिन बढ़ता जा रहा था। टोपे की बहादुरी की प्रशंसा करते हुए उन दिनों के एक ब्रिटिश अफसर ने लिखा था – "जब तक कालपी में विद्रोह का बिगुल बजता रहा और कालपी पर शत्रुओं (भारतीयों) का कब्जा बना रहा उस समय तक वहाँ के लोगों को विश्वास हो चला था कि चाहे भारत के पूर्वी और पश्चिमी क्षेत्रों पर अंग्रेज़ों का कब्ज़ा हो गया हो, लेकिन भारत के केंद्रीय स्थान पर तो विद्रोहियों का ही कब्ज़ा रहेगा।"

लेकिन अंग्रेज़ लोग तो तिलमिला रहे थे। वे किसी भी तरह तांत्या टोपे को ख़त्म कर देना चाहते थे। यही हुआ भी। सर कौलिन कैंपबेल के हमले का मुख्य निशाना वे ही बने।

तांत्या टोपे में लोगों के दिलों को जीत लेने की अद्भुत शक्ति थी। वे जानते थे कि वे जिस शत्रु से लड़ रहे हैं, वह ताकत में उनसे कहीं ज्यादा है। उनकी सेना के अनेक लोग रोज़ लड़ाई में मारे जाते। लेकिन टोपे रोज़ उतने ही नए सैनिक भरती भी कर लिया करते थे। इसी से आप अंदाज़ा लगा सकते हैं कि वे कितने लोकप्रिय हो गए थे। उन्हें अपने देश की जनता और राजाओं की देशभक्ति पर अटूट भरोसा था।

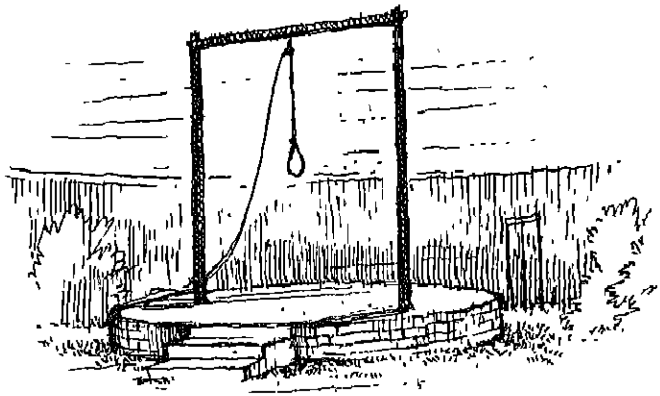
लेकिन इस दुनिया में पाँचों अँगुलियाँ तो बराबर होती नहीं हैं। उन्हें जितने राजाओं पर अटूट भरोसा था उनमें से कुछ गद्दार भी निकले। एक बार की बात है। शत्रु से दिनभर लड़ते-लड़ते टोपे घायल हो गए थे। वे बुरी तरह थक भी चुके थे। पास में ही नरवर नाम का एक स्थान था। नरवर के राजा टोपे के पुराने मित्र थे। उस रात टोपे उन्हीं के यहाँ रुके। उन्होंने टोपे को धोखा दिया। अब तक नरवर के राजा टोपे की बजाय अंग्रेज़ों के मित्र बन चुके थे। उन्होंने बिना किसी भी तरह की देर किए अपने अंग्रेज़-मित्रों तक यह खबर

पहुँचा दी कि टोपे उनके यहाँ ठहरे हुए हैं।

अंग्रेज़ फौजें देखते-ही-देखते वहाँ पहुँच गईं और उन्होंने टोपे को घर दबोचा। आज वे खुशी से झूम उठे थे क्योंकि उन्होंने आज टोपे को गिरफ्तार करने में सफलता पा ली थी। शत्रु पक्ष जीत गया था। वे टोपे को गिरफ्तार करके सीप्री (शिवपुरी) ले आए। लोगों को दिखाने के लिए वहाँ उन पर एक मुकदमा भी चलाया गया और हलकी-फुलकी जाँच-पड़ताल करके उन्हें फाँसी दे दी गई।

जब टोपे फाँसी के तख़्ते की ओर बढ़ रहे थे तो उनके चेहरे पर किसी तरह का डर अथवा पछतावा नहीं था। मरने से पहले उन्होंने एक बार फिर कहा– "मेरी आत्मा गवाही दे रही है कि मैंने जो कुछ किया, ठीक किया। मेरी लड़ाई अपने अधिकारों को पाने के लिए और न्याय की रक्षा के लिए थी।"

काश ! टोपे के हत्यारों ने उन्हे फाँसी देने के बाद लज्जा और ग्लानि महसूस की हो, कौन जाने!



6

पचहत्तर बरस की उम्र में भी जवान

"उनकी दाढ़ी पक गई थी, चमड़ी पर झुर्रियाँ उभर आई थीं और शरीर से वे बूढ़े ही दिखाई देते थे। लेकिन उस समय शायद ही ऐसा कोई दूसरा आदमी रहा होगा जिसके दिल और दिमाग में जवानी का वही जोश खलबलाता रहता हो जैसा कि राजा कुमर सिंह में था।"

इस भावना की पंक्तियाँ एक लोकगीत में आती हैं। सचमुच कुमर सिंह (जिन्हें कुँअर सिंह के नाम से भी जाना जाता था) इस पचहत्तर बरस की उम्र में जवान ही तो थे। अगर उनमें जवानी का यह जोश न होता तो सन् 1857 ई. में अंग्रेज़-हुक्मरानों के खिलाफ़ वे युद्ध का बिगुल कैसे बजा देते?

उन दिनों बिहार में जगदीशपुर नाम का एक राज्य था। कुमर सिंह यहीं के राजा थे। उनके पूर्वज लोगों का बहुत पहले से यहाँ शासन चला आ रहा था। लोग कुमर सिंह के खानदान के बारे में कहा करते थे कि ये लोग राजा विक्रमादित्य के वंशज थे। आम लोग उज्जैन के महान राजा विक्रमादित्य के बारे में तो पढ़ ही चुके होंगे।

कुमर सिंह को अपने लड़कपन में जगदीशपुर के पास के जंगलों में आँखमिचौनी खेलने का बहुत शौक था। जब वे जवान हो गए तब भी जंगलों में घूमने-फिरने का उनके मन में बड़ा चाव रहता था। लड़कपन की आँखमिचौनी का खेल अब नकली लड़ाइयों के खेल में बदल गया था। कुमर सिंह की टोली के लोग दो खेमों में बँट जाते और गुरिल्लाओं की छापामार लड़ाई लड़ा करते। खेल-ही-खेल में इन लोगों में नकली मुठभेड़ें हुआ करती थीं और एक टोली के लोग दूसरी टोली के लोगों पर हमला करके एक-दूसरे को गिरफ्तार करने की कोशिशें किया करते।

इस तरह कुमर सिंह के लोगों ने शौक-ही-शौक में गुरिल्ला मुठभेड़ों की ट्रेनिंग प्राप्त कर ली थी। कुमर सिंह के इसी शौक के कारण 1857 ई. के गदर के दिनों में ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी को भयंकर रूप से

लेने-के-देने पड़ गए थे। कुमर सिंह के पास कोई बड़ी फौज़ तो थी नहीं, थोड़े-से सिपाही लोग ही थे। इन सिपाहियों में भी बहुत-से सिपाही अनाड़ी और अप्रशिक्षित थे। लेकिन इन मुट्ठीभर सिपाहियों ने ही अंग्रेज़ सैनिकों को ऐसी धूल चटाई कि उन्हें छठी का दूध याद आ गया। ये अंग्रेज़ सैनिक जिन कप्तानों के नेतृत्व में लड़ रहे थे, उनके नाम थे – लार्ड मार्क केर और जनरल ली ग्रांड। इनमें लार्ड मार्क केर वही व्यक्ति थे जो क्रीमिया की अपनी मुहिम के कारण बहुत मशहूरी पा चुके थे।

अंग्रेज़ लोगों ने जगदीशपुर पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया था। कुमर सिंह लाचार हो गए क्योंकि उनके पास उस समय अंग्रेज़ों से लड़ने की पूरी तैयारी नहीं थी। वे जगदीशपुर से चुपचाप खिसक गए और अपनी बारी आने का इंतजार करने लगे। कुमर सिंह भी भारत-माँ के सच्चे सपूत थे। उनकी सबसे बड़ी इच्छा यह थी कि अंग्रेज़ों को केवल जगदीशपुर से ही नहीं, बल्कि पूरे देश से खदेड़ भगाना चाहिए। आप नाना साहब के बारे में पढ़ते हुए जान चुके हैं कि उन्होंने एक बार सभी राजाओं से अपील की थी कि वे अंग्रेज़ों के खिलाफ़ लड़ाई में उनकी मदद करें। कुमर सिंह फौरन ही नाना साहब की मदद करने के लिए अपने थोड़े-से सिपाहियों को साथ लेकर कानपुर की ओर लपके। रास्ते में जब उन्हें पता चला कि अंग्रेज़ सैनिक लखनऊ की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं तो वे उनका मुकाबला करने के लिए उधर की ओर ही भागे और उनसे टक्कर ली। कुमर सिंह ने कई स्थानों पर लड़ाई छेड़ रखी थी। कुमर सिंह के सैनिकों ने कई बार शत्रु की फौजों पर हमले किए। कई मुठभेड़ों में तो कुमर सिंह साफ-साफ जीत भी गए। कई स्थानों पर कुमर सिंह के सैनिकों ने शत्रु-सैनिकों के छक्के छुड़ा दिए और वे सिर पर पाँव रखकर भाग खड़े हुए। शत्रुओं को बुरी तरह छकाने के बाद ये लोग जगदीशपुर वापस लौटने की सोचने लगे।

अंग्रेज़ लोग इस करारी हार के कड़वे अनुभव को कैसे भूल सकते थे? उन्होने योजना बनाई कि जब ये लोग बेख़बरी में जगदीशपुर लौट रहे हों तभी इन्हें रास्ते में घेर लिया जाए। अंग्रेज़ सैनिक भूखे भेड़िए की तरह इन लोगों का पीछा कर रहे थे, लेकिन कुमर सिंह का बाल भी बाँका नहीं कर पा रहे थे। कुमर सिंह और उनके सिपाही बेधड़क अपने घर की ओर बढ़े चले आ रहे थे। कुमर सिंह के साथ उस समय लगभग एक हज़ार सिपाही थे। इन सिपाहियों के पास जैसे हथियार थे उन्हें बढ़िया किस्म के हथियार तो बिलकुल ही नहीं कहा जा सकता था। कुमर सिंह अपने सफेद पालतू घोड़े पर बैठे सबसे आगे-आगे चल रहे थे। उनके हाथ में नंगी तलवार चमचमा रही थी। वे अपने सिपाहियो के लिए प्रेरणा के अद्भुत स्रोत थे। वे अपने सिपाहियों का नेतृत्व इतनी कुशलता से कर रहे थे कि अपने से बढ़िया तरीके से सुसज्जित अंग्रेज़ फौज को भी उन्होंने कई बार धूल चटा दी थी।



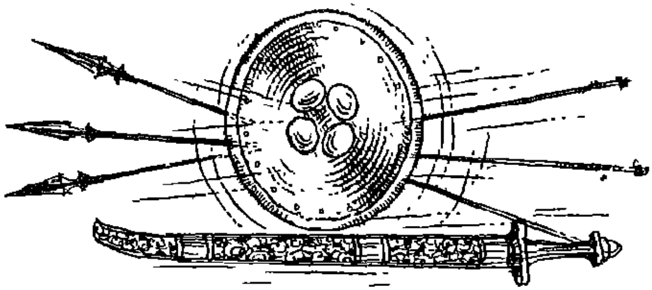
एक बार की बात है। दोनों पक्षों में घमासान युद्ध हो रहा था। शत्रु की ओर से एक गोली दनदनाती हुई आई और कुमर सिंह के दाएँ हाथ की कलाई को छेदते हुए निकल गई। उनका हाथ पक चला और उसमें जहर फैलना शुरू हो गया। शीघ्र ही यह पता चल गया कि यदि उनके हाथ को पूरी तरह काट नहीं दिया गया तो ज़हर का असर सारे शरीर में फैल जाएगा और इससे उनकी मृत्यु भी हो सकती है।

समय बहुत कम था। आस-पास कहीं कोई डाक्टर भी नहीं था जिसे कुमर सिंह की सहायता के लिए बुलाया जा सके। अब कुमर सिंह की दिलावरी देखिए। वे स्वयं गंगा के किनारे जा खड़े हुए और बोले – "हे गंगा मैया!' लो, अपने बेटे की यह छोटी-सी भेंट स्वीकार करो।" यह कहते हुए उन्होंने खुद अपने बाएँ हाथ से अपनी दाहिनी बाजू पर तलवार का भरपूर वार किया। बाँह कटकर गिर पड़ी। उन्होंने इस कटी बाँह को गंगा मैया को चढ़ा दिया।

यह विचित्र आपरेशन उन्होंने अपनी दृढ़ इच्छा शक्ति के बल पर स्वयं कर लिया था। यदि उनकी उम्र कुछ कम रही होती तो शायद उनका घाव जल्दी भरजाता और वे बच जाते। लेकिन अब तो वे काफी बूढ़े हो गए थे। इस पर वे दो साल से लगातार शत्रुओं से लड़ रहे थे। अब उनके शरीर में और ताकत नहीं बची थी। दूसरे ही दिन 24 अप्रैल 1858 को उनका देहावसान हो गया।

लेकिन जगदीशपुर अंग्रेज़ों के हाथ से निकल चुका था क्योंकि अब कुमर सिंह के छोटे भाई अमर सिंह ने उनके खिलाफ तलवार उठा ली थी। अमर सिंह भी अपनी पूरी ताकत से अंत तक अंग्रेज़ों से लड़ते रहे। लेकिन आप जानते हैं कि अकेला चना भाड़ नहीं फोड़ सकता। नतीजा वही हुआ। अंत में उनके किले को भी अंग्रेज़ों ने जीत लिया।

अमर सिंह बच तो गए लेकिन उनके अंतिम दिन कैसे और कहाँ बीते, इस बारे में इतिहास मौन है।



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[illegible]

न्यूयार्क में एक 'सिटी हाल' पार्क है। इस पार्क में एक प्रतिमा बनी हुई है। यह प्रतिमा नाथन हेल की है। नाथन ने अपनी किशोरावस्था में ही अमरीका के स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में स्वयं को बलि चढ़ा दिया था। उसी की याद में यह प्रतिमा वहाँ लगाई गई है।

उन दिनों अमरीकन लोग भी आजादी पाने के लिए जार्ज वाशिंगटन के नेतृत्व में अंग्रेज़ों से लड़ रहे थे। अमरीका में शत्रु सैनिकों के बहुत सारे कैंप लगे हुए थे। ये लोग अपने-अपने कैंपों में अगले दिन के युद्ध की योजनाएँ बनाया करते थे। वाशिंगटन के लिए यह बहुत जरूरी हो गया था कि वे किसी भी तरह इन योजनाओं के बारे में पहले से जानकारी प्राप्त कर लिया करें ताकि वे भी बचाव और जवाबी हमले की तैयारियाँ कर सकें। काम बहुत जोख़िम का था। जासूसी करने के लिए शत्रु के कैंप में कौन जाता? ऐसी हालत में नाथन हेल ने हिम्मत की। वह जानता था कि यदि वह जासूसी करता हुआ पकड़ लिया गया तो मारा जाएगा। लेकिन इधर देश की आजादी का सवाल था। यह सवाल एक जिंदगी से कहीं ज्यादा बड़ा सवाल था। सो, नाथन ने हिम्मत की। वह शत्रु-कैंप में चोरी-छिपे किसी तरह घुस गया, लेकिन उसे पकड़ लिया गया और सूली पर लटका दिया गया।

फाँसी पर झूलने से एक मिनट पहले उसने एक बयान दिया था। जल्लाद ने व्यंग्यपूर्वक उससे पूछा– 'तुम इतने फुर्तीले नौजवान हो, अगर अपने बारे में कुछ कहना चाहते हो तो कहो।' नाथन हेल इस समय बहुत शांत और गम्भीर था।

क्या आप जानते हैं कि अपनी अंतिम साँसें लेते हुए उसने क्या कहा? उसने कहा– 'मुझे इस बात का दुख है कि अपने देश को देने के लिए मुझे केवल एक ही जीवन क्यों मिला?'

जब अमरीका के स्कूलों में पढ़नेवाले विद्यार्थियों ने नाथन हेल का यह बयान पढ़ा तो अंग्रेज़ों से आज़ादी पाने के लिए उनका भी खून खौलने लगा।

इसी तरह का एक नाथन हेल भारत में भी हुआ। उसका नाम मुहम्मद अली खाँ था। कानपुर और लखनऊ के बीच किसी स्थान पर उसे भी पेड़ पर लटकाकर फाँसी दे दी गई थी। जब उसे फाँसी दी जा रही थी तो बात करने के लिए ज़ल्लाद के अलावा उसके निकट एक अंग्रेज़ आदमी भी मौजूद था। उस अंग्रेज़ का नाम था– फार्ब्स मिशेल। ज़ल्लाद तो ज़ल्लाद ही था, लेकिन फार्ब्स मिशेल नेक और दयालु सज्जन था। अली खाँ की फाँसी से पहले की रात फार्ब्स मिशेल के साथ ही बीती थी।

फार्ब्स मिशेल एक लेखक भी था। उस रात अली खाँ ने अपने दोस्त मिशेल को अपनी अंगूठी उपहार के रूप में दी थी। उस रात मिशेल उसके साथ उसके रक्षक के रूप में रहा था। मिशेल ने बाद में लिखा भी था– "वह अंगूठी मेरे पास अब भी है। गदर में जो तबाही मची थी, उसकी अब सिर्फ यही एक निशानी मेरे पास बची है। मैं मुहम्मद अली खाँ के इतिहास (यादगारों) के साथ-साथ यह अंगूठी भी अपने बच्चों को सौंप जाऊँगा।" कौन जानता है, यह अंगूठी मिशेल के नाती-पोतों के पास अब भी हो? (**द रिलीफ आफ लखनऊ** : विलियम फार्ब्स मिशेल)

फार्ब्स मिशेल तिरानवेवीं सदर्नलैंड हाई लैंडर्स नाम की रेजीमेंट में एक अधिकारी था। यह रेजीमेंट कानपुर की बाहरी सीमा पर पड़ाव डाले हुए थी। उस पड़ाव के अहाते में जैमी ग्रीन नाम का एक आदमी आया-जाया करता था। वह आलूबुखारे के केक बेचा करता था और रेजीमेंट के सिपाही उससे खूब घुल-मिल चले थे। वह खूबसूरत भी बहुत था। उसकी पोशाक से लगता था जैसे वह उसके शरीर से ही निकली हो। वह अपनी मूँछों और गलमुच्छों को भी बड़ा सँवार कर रखता था। अंग्रेज़ी तो जैसे उसकी जुबान से बही-सी पड़ती थी, बहुत धारा-प्रवाह अंग्रेज़ी बोल लेता था वह। सिपाही लोग मानने लगे थे कि वह वाक़ई बहुत बुद्धिमान है। वे उससे केक खरीदते और चटकारे ले-लेकर खाते। उनकी इस बात पर निगाह ही नहीं गई कि इतना पढ़ा-लिखा आदमी केक बेच-बेचकर अपना पेट क्यों पालता है? अगर कोई यह सवाल उठाता भी तो 'जैमी ग्रीन' इतना चतुर था कि उसके पास हर सवाल का जवाब मौज़ूद रहता था।

किसी समय जैमी ग्रीन उन लोगों के साथ था जिन्होंने ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के विरुद्ध विद्रोह कर दिया था। उसने एक भारतीय जासूस के लिए कुछ महत्त्वपूर्ण सूचनाएँ भी इकट्ठी की थीं। लेकिन बाद में जैमी की



उन लोगो से नहीं पटी और अब वह कंपनी के कैंपों में केक बेचने लगा।

एक बार की बात है। एक सिपाही ने जैमी का केक तो खा लिया लेकिन पैसे देने में आनाकानी करने लगा। जैमी बोला– "भाई, मज़ाक मज़ाक होती है। लेकिन तुम जो मज़ाक कर रहे हो वह तो बड़ी भारी मज़ाक है क्योंकि तुम मेरे आलूबुखारे के केक तो खा चुके हो और अब पैसे देने से मुकर रहे हो।"

जैमी ग्रीन की इस बात से हँसी के ठहाके लग उठे। जैमी रोज़-ब-रोज़ लोकप्रिय होता जा रहा था। हुआ यह कि इन सैनिकों में एक जासूस भी था, जिसने 'जैमी' को पहचान लिया और उससे विश्वासघात करते हुए यह बात अपने ब्रिगेडियर मेजर को भी बता दी। अधिकारी लोग डर के मारे सहमे रह गए जब उन्हें पता चला कि जैमी जैमी नहीं, वह तो मुहम्मद अली खाँ था जो रुहेलखंड के शाही परिवार का था। वह एक पढ़ा-लिखा इंजीनियर था जो दो बार इंग्लैंड रह आया था। पहली बार नेपाल के हिज़ हाईनैस जंग बहादुर के सैक्रेट्री के रूप में वह इंग्लैंड गया था और दूसरी बार नाना साहब के दूत के रूप में। यदि उसे कोई न पहचान पाता तो उसने हाई लैंडर्स की योजना की जो सूचनाएँ एकत्रित कर ली थीं,उनसे विद्रोहियों को बहुत लाभ मिलता।

ब्रिगेडियर मेजर के हुक्म से उस पर कुछ सिपाही टूट पड़े और उसे धर दबोचा। उस रात के लिए उसे फार्ब्स मिशेल की देख-रेख में छोड़ दिया गया।

वे सिपाही लोग, जो उसके चुटकुलों और मज़ेदार बातों को बड़े चटखारे ले-लेकर सुना करते थे, अब उस पर फब्तियाँ कसने लगे। फब्तियाँ कसने का उत्साह उनमें अपराध करने की सीमा तक बढ़ गया था। वह कहीं से सूअर का मांस ले आए। इससे पहले कि वे उसकी हत्या करते, उनकी इच्छा थी कि वे उसे सूअर का मांस खिलाकर उसकी धार्मिक भावनाओं को चोट पहुँचाएँ। लेकिन फार्ब्स मिशेल ने इन दुष्ट सिपाहियों को उसके साथ इतना दुर्व्यवहार नहीं करने दिया। पास में ही एक भोजनालय था। मिशेल ने अली खाँ के लिए वहाँ से खाना मँगवाया और उसके साथ बैठकर उसे खिलाया। वे सारी रात साथ-साथ बैठे रहे और जागते रहे। मिशेल की यह हमदर्दी दो कारणों से थी। एक तो वह यह चाहता था कि अली खाँ के साथ ऐसा कुछ बर्ताव न किया जाए जिससे वह भागने की सोचने लगे। दूसरे, वह उससे प्रभावित भी हो गया था।

फार्ब्स ने उन बातों को लिखा है जो उन दोनों में उस रात हुई थीं। इन आलेखों से पता चलता है कि मुहम्मद सिर्फ एक देशभक्त और आदर्शवादी व्यक्ति ही नहीं था, बल्कि बहुत साहसी और सज्जन भी था। उसे

पता चल चुका था कि अब कुछ ही घंटों बाद उसे मर जाना है। लेकिन उसे इसका कोई पछतावा नहीं था। उसने अपनी मातृभूमि की रक्षा के लिए अपनी जान की बाज़ी लगा दी थी। उसने एक बार कहा भी था– "हालाँकि हम अपने देश को अंग्रेज़ी हकूमत से आज़ाद करा पाने में असफल रहे हैं लेकिन मुझे यकीन है कि हम कुछ अच्छा भी कर सके हैं। जितने आदमियों ने अपना बलिदान दिया है, वह व्यर्थ नहीं जाएगा। अब भी मेरे देश के शोषित और दलित भाइयों के सामने उज्जवल भविष्य की संभावनाएँ हैं, लेकिन अब उनका भविष्य देखने के लिए मैं जीवित नहीं बच पाऊँगा।"

दूसरे अंग्रेज़ों की तरह फार्ब्स मिशेल के मन में भी भारत के बारे में बहुत-सी गलतफहमियाँ पैदा हो गई थीं। मुहम्मद अली खाँ ने उस रात मिशेल की सारी गलतफहमियाँ दूर कर दीं। मिशेल ने उससे पूछा– "यदि गदर मचानेवालों ने किसी यूरोपियन महिला का अपमान किया हो तो ˙˙ ?" मुहम्मद अली ने उत्तर दिया– "आप इस देश में एक अजनबी हैं इसीलिए ऐसा सवाल पूछ रहे हैं। जो कोई भी इस देश के रीति-रिवाज़ों के बारे में थोड़ा भी जानता है,वह समझता है कि इस तरह की कहानियाँ झूठी होती हैं जो इसलिए गढ़ी जाती हैं ताकि भारतीयों और अंग्रेज़ों में मनमुटाव बढ़े, खासतौर से ऐसी हालत में, जबकि पहले से ही दोनों ओर के लोगों में मनमुटाव पैदा हो चुका है।"

उसने फार्ब्स के मन में यह भी बैठा दिया कि अंग्रेज़ लोग वाकई में उतने शूरवीर लोग नहीं है जितना कि वे अपने आपको विद्रोहियो को कुचलते समय दिखाने की कोशिश करते हैं। उनकी शूरवीरता की कहानियाँ भी इतनी सच नहीं हैं जितनी कि प्रचलित हैं।

पौ फटी। मुहम्मद अली खाॅ ने अल्लाह की इबादत की और फार्ब्स मिशेल को बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद दिया। फार्ब्स ने लिखा है– "इस आदमी में एक बार ˙˙˙ सिर्फ एक बार कुछ दुर्बलता दिखाई दी थी। रुहेलखण्ड में उसके घर में उसकी पत्नी और दो बेटे थे। उन्हें याद करते हुए वह एक बार बुदबुदाया था– "वे लोग कभी नहीं जान पाएँगे कि उनके दुर्भाग्यशाली पिता का क्या हुआ?" लेकिन साथ ही उसने यह कहते हुए खुद पर काबू भी पा लिया था कि मैंने फ्रांस और इंग्लैंड का इतिहास पढ़ा है। इस समय मुझे दाँतों की तरह होना चाहिए और किसी तरह की कोई कमज़ोरी नहीं दिखानी चाहिए।

जल्दी ही कुछ सिपाही अपने इस बंदी को लेने आ पहुँचे और उसे कहीं ले गए। कुछ देर बाद फार्ब्स मिशेल को लखनऊ जाना था। जब वे जा रहे थे तो रास्ते में उन्होंने देखा कि उनके रात के मेहमान की लाश एक पेड़ पर झूल रही है। फार्ब्स ठंडी आहें भरता हुआ आगे बढ़ गया।

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जब यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि 1857 के महान विप्लव का अंत हो रहा है और इसके नेता या तो मारे जा चुके हैं अथवा छिप गए हैं तो ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी की फौज और उसके अधिकारी भारतीयों के प्रति अपने व्यवहार में निर्दयी हो उठे। उन्होंने हजारों निर्दोष पुरुषों और स्त्रियों को मौत के घाट उतार दिया। उनका विचार था कि ऐसा करके वे भारतीय जनता को उस सीमा तक आतंकित कर देगे कि वह बाद में कभी भी उनके विरुद्ध विद्रोह करने की जुर्रत ही न कर सके।

कई अंग्रेज़ों ने स्वयं ही कम्पनी की फौजों की क्रूरता के कई वृतांत लिखे हैं। इनमें लन्दन के ''द टाइम्स'' के विशेष संवाददाता विलियम हॉवर्ड प्रमुख हैं।

एक स्थान पर एक दर्जन लोगों को सिर्फ इसलिए मौत के घाट उतार दिया गया क्योंकि ''उनके चेहरे गलत दिशा की ओर फिरे हुए थे।'' जब एक रेजीमेंट विजय-मार्च करते हुए इन लोगों तक पहुँची तो ये लोग दूसरी ओर देख रहे थे।

एक छोटा लड़का जो कि किसी अंधे को ले जा रहा था, कम्पनी के अफसर के पैरों में गिर पड़ा। इस अफसर ने तत्काल ''अपना रिवाल्वर निकाल लिया और उस अभागे दीन-याचक की कनपटी पर सटा दिया।'' किसी तरह रिवाल्वर चल नहीं पाई। ''उसने दोबारा रिवाल्वर का घोड़ा दबाया, लेकिन इस बार फिर रिवाल्वर चल के नहीं दी। उसे अपनी निष्ठुरता छोड़ने के तीन अवसर मिल चुके थे, लेकिन फिर भी उसने चौथी बार घोड़ा दबाया। इस बार वह सूरमा अफसर सफल हो गया और लड़के का खून उसके पैरों में बहने लगा.....।''

एक बार कुछ कुली दीवार की छाया में विश्राम कर रहे थे। अचानक उन्होंने देखा कि एक अंग्रेज नौजवान

कुलाँचें भरता और दहाड़ता हुआ उसी ओर बढ़ा आ रहा है। उसकी आँखों से आग बरस रही थी, जानवर की गर्दन के बालों से बने लंबे पाश उसके मोटे हेलमेट के नीचे झूल रहे थे और उसके हाथ में एक बड़ी छड़ी भी थी।

वह कुलियों पर से होकर दौड़ता हुआ गुज़र गया और वे लोग, जैसे कि मानो वे घास हों, अपंग बने अपना खून देखते रहे।

ये "विजेताओं" के व्यवहार के कुछ नमूने हैं। पराजित लोग कैसा व्यवहार करते थे? क्या सभी लोग भयाक्रांत हो गए थे? आइए, फार्ब्स मिशेल द्वारा छोड़े गए एक रिकार्ड पर नज़र डालें।

लखनऊ के पास एक बाग की घटना है। इस दिन फार्ब्स मिशेल की रेजीमेंट ने दो हजार लोग मारे थे। सैनिक लोग थक गए थे। सूरज तप रहा था और ये लोग प्यासे थे।

सैनिक लोग बाग में विश्राम करने आए। संभवतः वे लोग अपने खूनी हाथ भी बाग में धोना चाहते थे। बाग के एक कोने में पीपल का पेड़ था। पेड़ के नीचे कुछ बर्तन रखे थे।

सैनिकों ने सोचा कि उन बर्तनों में पानी होगा। कुछ लोग उन बर्तनों की ओर भागे और बैठ गए।

लेकिन वे उठे नहीं। न जाने किस दिशा से गोलियाँ आ रही थीं। वे मरने लगे।

किंकर्तव्य-विमूढ़ कप्तान ने अंत में एक सैनिक से कहा कि वह पेड़ की झुरझुरी चोटी पर जाकर खोज-ख़बर ले। उसने शत्रु ढूँढ़ लिया। उसने शत्रु पर निशाना साधा और गोलियाँ बरसाने लगा।

अचानक एक शरीर नीचे आ गिरा। उसके बदन पर उसके शरीर की नाप के अनुसार एक लाल जैकेट थी जो उसने कसकर पहन रखी थी। उसने गुलाबी रंग के सिल्क का पाजामा भी पहन रखा था।

"यह एक नवयुवती थी। वह मर चुकी थी। उसके पास पुराने ढंग की एक भारी पिस्तौल थी जो घुड़सवार सेना की थी। एक भरी हुई पिस्तौल अब भी उसकी पेटी में बँधी थी। उसने हमला करने से पहले पेड़ पर बैठने योग्य एक मोर्चे जैसा स्थान बड़ी सावधानी से बना रखा था। उसने आधे दर्जन से अधिक आदमी मार डाले।"

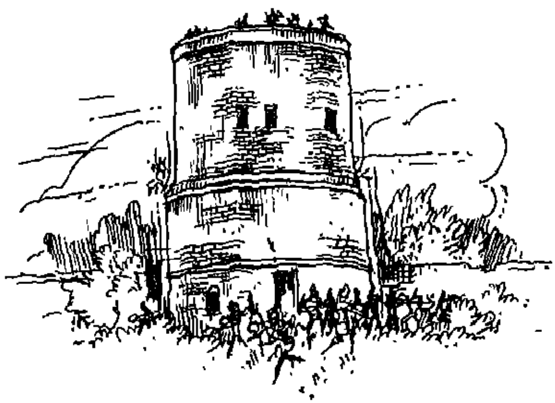
शायद हमें यह कभी पता नहीं चल सकेगा कि यह स्त्री कौन थी? जैसा उसका वर्णन हमें मिलता है, उससे





पता चलता है कि वह किसी कुलीन घराने की स्त्री थी। उसकी अपनी मातृभूमि के साथ और सम्भवतः उसके अपने परिवार के साथ भी जो अन्याय हुआ था, वह उस अन्याय का अपनी पूरी ताकत से बदला लेना चाहती थी।

लेकिन वह तो अनेक लोगों में से एक थी जिन्होंने अपने साहस की शानदार मिसालें कायम की थीं। जैसा कि चार्ल्स बैल ने "इंडियन म्यूटिनी" में लिखा है- "इस मचान पर एक के बाद एक करके स्थानीय लोगों की अनेक टोलियाँ चढ़ती रहीं। कुछ क्रांतिकारियों ने मौत के अपने सामने आ उपस्थित होने पर भी अपने मन को जिस तरह शांत रखा और अपने आचरण-व्यवहार में जो शालीनता प्रदर्शित की, उससे उन्हें वही यश मिला जो कि उन शहीदों को मिलता है जो किसी खास मकसद के लिए अपना जीवन कुर्बान कर देते हैं।



9

बाघा जतिन की बहादुरी के किस्से

सन् 1906 ई० की बात है। अप्रैल का महीना था। बंगाल में नदिया नाम का एक जिला है। इस जिले में एक गाँव है – कोया। कोया गाँव से होकर एक नदी बहती है– गोदुई। चारों ओर गहरा सन्नाटा। इस सन्नाटे को छेदती हुई एक विचित्र चीख लोगों ने सुनी। पास ही दलदली भूमि थी जहाँ झाड़ियाँ उगी हुई थीं। इन्हीं झाड़ियों में से कहीं से चीख की आवाजें आ रही थीं। गाँव के लोग उधर की ओर ही भागे।

जो कुछ उन्होंने वहाँ देखा उसे देखकर उनके रोंगटे खड़े हो गए। ऐसा आश्चर्य उन्होंने अपने जीवन में पहले कभी नहीं देखा था। उन्होंने देखा कि नौ फुट लम्बे एक चीते से एक युवक जूझ रहा है। बाघ के सामने वह युवक निहत्था था। उसके पास बस एक चाकू था।

चीते की और उस लड़के की यह गुत्थमगुत्था लगभग बीस मिनट तक चलती रही। कभी युवक चीते के ऊपर तो कभी चीता युवक के ऊपर। सूर्य उग रहा था, नदी के पास आकाश में लालिमा छाती जा रही थी। इधर ढलता हुआ अंधेरा और आकाश की लाली, उधर बहते हुए खून का चकमदार लाल रंग दोनों एक जैसे लग रहे रहे थे।

लड़ते-लड़ते लड़ाई का जैसे छोर आ गया था। युवक और चीता – दोनों आपस में एक दूसरे से भिड़े हुए थे। गाँववालों ने अचानक देखा कि उन दोनों की जमीन पर लोट-पोट हो रही है। देखते-देखते युवक उठ खड़ा हुआ। उसकी निर्वस्त्र छाती पर चीते के नाखूनों से घाव हो गए थे जिनसे खून बह रहा था। ऐसा लगता था मानो उसने लाल फूलों का हार पहन रखा है। उसके चेहरे पर विजय की मुस्कान खिलखिला रही थी।

मरे हुए उस चीते को और उस घायल युवक को तत्काल कलकत्ता ले जाया गया। डाक्टरों का कहना था

कि उस युवक का जीवन बचाने के लिए उसकी दाईं टाँग काटनी ही पड़ेगी। लेकिन उस युवक ने मना कर दिया। वह चाहता था कि वह स्वस्थ और सांगोपांग रहे। हालाँकि उसने एक चीता मार डाला था, लेकिन अभी तो उसे शेर से (अंग्रेज़ों से) लड़ना था।

जिस आश्चर्यजनक तरीके से उस युवक के स्वास्थ्य में सुधार हुआ, उसे देखकर डाक्टर भी दंग रह गए। इस युवक के सर्जन का नाम सुरेश सर्वाधिकारी था। उन्होंने इस घटना का बड़ा दिलचस्प किस्सा लिखा है। उन्होंने लिखा है कि केवल अपनी दृढ़ इच्छाशक्ति के सहारे ही इस युवक के इतने भयंकर घाव भर सके और वह चंगा हो सका।

इस युवक की उम्र अभी लगभग सत्ताइस साल ही थी। एक चीता मार लेने के कारण इस युवक के नाम के साथ "बाघा" शब्द जुड़ गया।

जतिन 5 दिसम्बर 1879 ई० के दिन पैदा हुआ था। अभी वह पाँच वर्ष का भी नहीं हो पाया होगा कि उसके पिता श्री उमेश चन्द्र का देहांत हो गया। इसके बाद उसकी माँ भी चल बसीं। जतिन के एक मामा थे। उनके घर में उनकी एक विधवा बहन रहती थी–विनोद बाला। विनोद बाला ने ही जतिन को पाला-पोसा। अपनी तेरह साल से उन्नीस साल की उम्र के बीच जतिन ने व्यायाम करना, घुड़सवारी करना तथा लाठी और तलवार चलाना सीख लिया था।

एक बार कलकत्ता के गोरे बाजार में खड़ा जतिन एक रोमांचकारी दृश्य देख रहा था। एक अंग्रेज बाज़ार में खड़ा भारतीयों पर कोड़े बरसाता जा रहा था। कोई लोफर हो या प्रोफेसर, स्त्री हो या बच्चा – हर भारतीय पर कोड़े फटकारते हुए वह गिने जा रहा था – "लो, ये पैंतालीस, ये छियालीस"।

जतिन कुछ देर तो सब देखता रहा लेकिन जब उससे और अधिक न देखा गया तो वह उस मसखरे अंग्रेज पर अपनी पूरी ताकत से पिल पड़ा। जतिन ने एक झटके में उसका कोड़ा छीन लिया और उसे उठाकर धरती पर दे मारा।

"और ये लो ''''' उनचास।" अब कोड़ा जतिन का था और पीठ उस गोरे साहब की। जतिन कोड़े बरसाए जा रहा था।

ऐसी अनेक घटनाएँ जतिन के विद्यार्थी जीवन में घटीं। जतिन के मन ने यह कभी स्वीकार नहीं किया कि भारतीय लोग किसी गोरी चमड़ीवाले साहब के सेवक हैं, हालाँकि उन दिनों लोग ऐसा ही समझते थे। बाद

में जतिन बंगाल के राज्यपाल के सैक्रेट्री का स्टेनोग्राफर भी बन गया लेकिन उसके मन में गुलामी की भावना कभी नहीं आई। इसके विपरीत जतिन को जब भी कहीं कोई मौका मिलता, वह अंग्रेजों को बुरी-भली सुनाया करता और कभी-कभी तो उन्हे नीचा दिखाने तक को उतारू हो जाता।

कोया गाँव में जो गोदुई नदी बहती थी, उस पर एक पुल बनाया जा रहा था। जतिन की याददाश्त पर सबसे पहला दुखद प्रभाव इस नदी पर बने "खूनी पुल के हादसे" का पड़ा। यह घटना जतिन के जन्म से दस साल पहले ही घट चुकी थी। इस पुल को बनाने के लिए सैकड़ों लोग काम पर लगे हुए थे। ये लोग बड़ी मेहनत से अपना काम कर रहे थे। अचानक नदी में बाढ़ आ गई और अपने आप को बचाने के लिए इन कामगार लोगों को कुछ पीछे हटना पड़ा। नतीजा यह हुआ कि काम संतोषपूर्ण ढंग से आगे नहीं बढ़ पा रहा था।

साहब लोग इन कामगारों को धमकाते हुए चीख उठे– "खबरदार! अगर पीछे हटे तो मार दिए जाओगे।" नदी में बाढ़ के पानी का रेला दुबारा आया और इन लोगों को फिर पीछे हटना पड़ा। अब क्या था, इन लोगो पर गोलियाँ बरसने लगीं। इस दुर्घटना में दस-बारह लोग मारे गए। जतिन ने अपने बचपन मे यह घटना सुनी थी।

जतिन के मन में अपने उन भारतीय भाइयों के प्रति एक गहरे किस्म का लगाव और प्यार पैदा हो गया जो सदा गूँगे रहते हैं और सब कुछ चुपचाप सहन कर लेते हैं। स्थानीय लोगों के मन पर गोरे साहबों के भय का भूत सवार रहता था। जतिन को जब भी मौका मिलता, वह उनके डर को दूर करने की पूरी कोशिश करता। जब वह डर के मारे सहमे हुए इन लोगों की हिम्मत बँधाता था तो उनके मन में किसी के प्रति भय और घृणा जैसी कोई भावना मौजूद नहीं रहती थी। जतिन के सभी साथियों ने यह स्वीकार किया है। वह अपना काम बड़े आनंद से अजर निर्लिप्तता की भावना से करता था। इससे पता चलता है कि उसके मन की गहराइयों में कितना संतुलन बना रहता था। एक क्रांतिकारी डा० जदुगोपाल मुकर्जी ने उसके बारे में लिखा है – कोई कायर से कायर आदमी भी उसके संपर्क में आकर अपने आप को "हीरो समझने लगता था।"

सन् 1905 ई० में वेल्स के राजकुमार कलकत्ता से गुज़र रहे थे। सड़क की दोनों पटरियों पर हजारों आदमियों-औरतों की भीड़ जमा थी। सड़क के एक किनारे एक बग्घी खड़ी हुई थी जिसमें कुछ महिलाएँ बैठी हुई थीं। जतिन ने देखा कि अचानक छह अंग्रेज इस बग्घी की छत पर उछलकर बैठ गए। अंग्रेज



लोग राजकुमार की सवारी तो अच्छी तरह देखना ही चाहते थे, साथ ही उनके मन में इन स्त्रियों से कुछ मखौलबाज़ी करने की इच्छा भी थी। वे खुशी के मारे सीटियाँ बजा रहे थे और उनके बूट-चढ़े पैर महिलाओं के चेहरों के सामने झूल रहे थे। हालाँकि इन महिलाओं के साथ उनके अंगरक्षक भी थे, लेकिन वे भी ये सब टुकुर-टुकुर देख रहे थे।

आग की लपटों के एक झोंके की तरह जतिन बग्घी पर टूट पड़ा। पलक झपकते ही लोगों ने देखा कि बग्घी की छत पर बैठे सब मनचले अंग्रेज धरती पर धूल चाटते नज़र आ रहे हैं। उन्होंने जतिन को पकड़कर पीटने की कोशिश की जरूर, लेकिन उनकी सब कोशिशें बेकार गईं। बार-बार अपना अपमान होते देख ये लोग भीड़ में कहीं चुपचाप खिसक गए।

इसके दो साल बाद की एक अन्य घटना है। जतिन रानाघाट जा रहा था। उन दिनों रेलगाड़ी में तीसरे दर्जे के दो डिब्बों को जोड़ने के लिए बीच में मोटी-मोटी लोहे की छड़ें लगी रहती थीं। जतिन के डिब्बे के साथ जुड़े डिब्बे में एक बूढ़े महाशय अपनी पुत्री के साथ यात्रा कर रहे थे। दो अंग्रेज भी उस डिब्बे में आ चढ़े। हालाँकि आधा डिब्बा खाली था, लेकिन वे दोनों उस लड़की के आस-पास सटकर बैठ गए और उसे भींचने की कोशिश करने लगे। बूढ़े महाशय ने उनसे प्रार्थना की कि वे शिष्टापूर्वक बैठें लेकिन उनकी प्रार्थना को उन्होंने जैसे सुना ही नहीं। बूढ़े महाशय दूसरे लोगों से अनुरोध करने लगे कि वे आकर उनकी रक्षा करें। लेकिन डिब्बे के सभी लोगों को जैसे साँप सूँघ गया था। वे चुपचाप बैठे रहे मानो उन्होंने शासक-जाति के लोगों को अपने से दुर्व्यवहार करने का अधिकार दे रखा हो।

जतिन अपने डिब्बे से दहाड़ उठा। उसकी दहाड़ सुनकर दोनों बदतमीज़ लोग कुछ चकराए तो अवश्य, लेकिन उन्होंने उसे भी अनसुना कर दिया।

देखते-देखते बाघ उठ खड़ा हुआ और उसने लोहे की छड़ों को खींचकर अलग-अलग कर दिया। वह लपककर दूसरे डिब्बे में जा पहुँचा और उन लोगों पर मुक्के बरसाने लगा। जतिन द्वारा खूब पिटाई से दोनों फर्श पर पड़े धूल चाटने लगे। जतिन ने उन दोनों को अपने पैरों के नीचे तब तक दबाए रखा जब तक उन्होंने लड़की और उसके पिता से क्षमा नहीं माँग ली। इसी तरह जतिन की अंग्रेजों से अंतिम मुठभेड़ तब हुई जब वह दार्जिलिंग जा रहा था। जिस गाड़ी में जतिन यात्रा कर रहा था, उसी में ब्रिटिश-फौज की एक टुकड़ी भी सफर कर रही थी। इस टुकड़ी में चार अधिकारी थे। जब-जब और जहाँ-जहाँ वे चाहते, गाड़ी रुकने पर प्लेटफार्म पर उतर पड़ते और ऐसे चहलकदमी करते मानो वे किसी नवाब के नाती हों।

एक स्टेशन पर जतिन अपने साथ यात्रा कर रहे एक यात्री के लिए पानी लेने नीचे उतरा। वह यात्री बीमार था और जतिन उसे पहले से जानता भी नहीं था। प्लेटफार्म के नल से मग से पानी भरकर वह जल्दी में अपने डिब्बे की ओर लपका। जल्दबाज़ी में उसके मग से कुछ पानी छलक गया। पानी के छींटे एक अंग्रेज अफसर की पतलून पर पड़ गए। वह अफसर तत्काल मुड़ा और जतिन की पीठ पर उसने एक बेंत जमा दी।

जतिन ने पलभर को अपना कंधा देखा, किन्तु वह रुका नहीं। बीमार यात्री डिब्बे में पानी के लिए चिल्ला रहा था। उसे पानी पिलाकर जतिन जल्दी ही प्लेटफार्म पर फिर उतर आया और उस अधिकारी की कलाई को कसकर पकड़ लिया। अधिकारी के हाथ से छूटकर उसकी छड़ी गिर पड़ी और वह दर्द के मारे चिल्लाने लगा। यह देखकर उस गोरे के दूसरे साथियों ने मिलकर जतिन पर हमला कर दिया, लेकिन जतिन ने हरेक को कलामुंडी खिला दी।

चारों ओर हल्ला-गुल्ला मच गया। जतिन को पुलिस ने पकड़ लिया। जतिन ने पुलिस को धमकी दी कि यदि उसे और अधिक देर तक रोके रखा गया तो एक बहुत जरूरी सरकारी काम खतरे में पड़ जाएगा जिसे करने के लिए वह दार्जिलिंग जा रहा है।

लेकिन पुलिस ने उस पर हमला करने का केस बना दिया।

मुकद्मे की सुनवाई शुरू होते ही अंग्रेज न्यायाधीश ने उन अफसरों से पूछा जिन पर हमला किया गया था– "तो तुम चारों पिटे ?" "जी हजूर!"– उन्होंने उत्तर दिया। जज महोदय थोड़ी देर तो चुप रहे, लेकिन फिर पूछा– "तुम्हारा मतलब है, ब्रिटिश फौज के तुम चार हट्टे-कट्टे एक साथ मिलकर भी कुछ नहीं कर सके और एक स्थानीय आदमी से पिट गए।" "जी!"– वे बगले झाँकते हुए बोले। जज महोदय धीरे-से बुदबुदाए– "समय बहुत खराब आ गया है। क्या तुम लोग नहीं समझते कि मैं अगर इस मुकदमे की कार्रवाई को आगे बढ़ाता हूँ तो इससे भारत में हम लोगों का मनोबल बुरी तरह टूटेगा और इससे तथाकथित राष्ट्रवादियों को शह मिलेगी।"

मामला जहाँ-का-तहाँ रफा-दफा कर दिया गया।

यह क्रान्तिकारी युग था। इस युग के जिन लोगों ने इस ज़माने में घटी जिन अनगिनत घटनाओं का वर्णन किया है या जिन घटनाओं को सच बताया है, उनसे हमें पता चलता है कि बाघा जतिन में अद्भुत साहस था

और वह बलिदान की भावना से ओतप्रोत रहता था। बाघ जतिन के चरित्र की प्रशंसा हम तभी कर सकते हैं जब हम उन उच्च भावनाओं को समझ सकें जिनसे उसका चरित्र ऐसा बन सका था। अपने लड़कपन में ही बाघ जतिन का संपर्क भगिनी निवेदिता से हो चुका था। कलकत्ता में उन दिनों महामारी फैली हुई थी। भगिनी निवेदिता रोगियों की सेवा के लिए सहायता कार्यों का संयोजन कर रही थीं। बाघ जतिन ने इस काम में उनका हाथ बँटाने के लिए जी-तोड़ मेहनत की थी। भगिनी निवेदिता इस होनहार युवक को एक बार विवेकानंद से मिलाने भी ले गई थीं। बाद में जतिन का श्री अरविंद से भी सीधा संपर्क बन गया था जो उन, दिनों भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद के मसीहा थे। ये श्री अरविंद ही थे जिन्होंने उस जमाने में भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद की एक धुँधली-सी हिलोर को भारतीय जन-सागर के शक्तिशाली ज्वारभाटे के रूप में बदल दिया था और नौजवानों को संदेश दिया था कि वे "भारत को धरती के एक टुकड़े के रूप में देखने की बजाय इसे अपनी जीती-जागती माता समझें।"

भारत के गवर्नर-जनरल लार्ड कर्ज़न ने बंगाल को दो राज्यों में बाँटने का फैसला कर लिया था। बंगाल के लोग दिन-ब-दिन ब्रिटिश विरोधी होते जा रहे थे। लार्ड कर्ज़न चाहते थे कि बंगाल को दो राज्यों में बाँटकर बंगाल के लोगों की एकता को तोड दिया जाए। उन दिनों यदि यह बँटवारा हो गया होता तो सरकार अपनी इस नीति को भारत के दूसरे राज्यों का बँटवारा करने के लिए भी लागू कर देती। राष्ट्रवाद तो सभी जगह पनपता जा रहा था।

लेकिन इस बँटवारे के खिलाफ़ बँगाल के लोगों में बहुत नाराज़गी थी।

इन दिनों भारत के नौजवान एक ही आदर्श से प्रेरित थे और वह आदर्श था– अंग्रेजों की हकूमत से किस तरह छुटकारा मिले! इस उद्देश्य को पाने के लिए वे कुछ भी करने को, यहाँ तक कि मरने को भी तैयार थे। क्रान्तिकारी युवकों के कई संगठन भी बन चुके थे। जतिन को नौजवान अपने नेता के रूप में देखने लगे थे।

इन संगठनों की कारगुज़ारियों से भारत के विदेशी शासकों में हड़कंप मच गया। इन संगठनों के नेता की खोज में ब्रिटिश अधिकारियों ने कोई कोर-कसर न उठा रखी। व्यापक पूछताछ और जाँच-पड़तालों के बाद यह पता चला कि इन संगठनों का नेता और कोई नहीं, जतिन ही था। उसे तुरंत गिरफ़्तार कर लिया गया।

लगातार पन्द्रह महीने तक जतिन को जेल में रखा गया और उसे बड़ी क्रूर यातनाएँ दी जाती रहीं। लेकिन

इन यातनाओं को भुगतते हुए भी जतिन का मस्तक सदा गर्व से ऊँचा उठा रहता। जतिन को कैद करने वालों के लिए भी यह कड़ी परीक्षा का समय था। अपने कैदी के शांत और अविचल व्यक्तित्व के सामने वे स्वयं को ज़लील और तुच्छ समझने लगे थे।

अंत में उन्होने अपनी चालें बदल दीं। अब वे जतिन से बड़ा आत्मीयतापूर्ण व्यवहार करने लगे। एक दिन एक मृदुभाषी अंग्रेज अफसर ने जतिन के सामने "एक मोटी रकम, एक सुंदर बंगला, अच्छी-से-अच्छी शराब और एक सुंदर स्त्री" देने का प्रस्ताव रखा।

"बकवास बंद करो!" -जतिन चीख पड़ा। जतिन ने उस अंग्रेज अफसर को कसकर एक मुक्का मारा। वह अफसर बड़ा भाग्यवान था कि मुक्का उसके सिर पर न पड़कर मेज पर पड़ा। मेज टूट गई।

: 2 :

जतिन पर आरोप लगानेवाले अफसर उसके खिलाफ़ कोई मामला सिद्ध नहीं कर सके। हालाँकि अपनी इस असफलता से शासकअफसरों को बड़ी निराशा और पीड़ा हुई, फिर भी जतिन सन् 1911 ई. के फ़रवरी महीने में रिहा कर दिया गया।

जतिन की सरकारी नौकरी खत्म कर दी गई। अपनी गुप्त क्रांतिकारी गतिविधियों पर परदा डाले रखने के लिए जतिन ने एक व्यापारिक फर्म खोल दी और निर्माण-कार्य के अनेक ठेके ले लिए। अपने व्यापार के सिलसिले में जतिन एक जगह से दूसरी जगह आया-जाया करता था। पुलिस को भी यह सोचकर राहत की साँस मिली कि अब उन्हें बाघ की ओर से कोई ख़तरा नहीं रहा। पुलिस ने यह भी महसूस किया कि अपनी पत्नी और दो बच्चों के लालन-पालन की ज़िम्मेदारी के कारण जतिन अब "दुनियादारी" में पड़ गया है। लेकिन असलियत यह थी कि जतिन उन लोगो से लगातार संपर्क बनाए रखता था जो भारतीय परिस्थितियों में अमूलचूल परिवर्तन चाहते थे। वे अनुशासित और शारीरिक दृष्टि से मज़बूत रहें, जतिन इसकी उन्हें ट्रेनिंग दिया करता था।

जतिन ने आज़ादी की लड़ाई दो तरह से छेड़ रखी थी। उसकी इच्छा थी कि भारतीयों के मन में भारत के प्रति इतना उत्कट प्रेम पैदा कर दिया जाए कि उन्हें विदेशी शासन का जुआ और अधिक बर्दाश्त न हो। वह

एक सहानुभूति-संपन्न फौज की सहायता से ऐसी जन-जागृति पैदा करना चाहता था कि जब क्रांति हो तो सफलतापूर्वक हो सके।

दूसरे, जो शक्तियाँ अंग्रेजों के खिलाफ़ थीं और जिन्हें भारत से सहानुभूति थी, उनका आह्वान किया जाना चाहिए कि वे इस भारतीय क्रांति में हाथ बँटाने के लिए आगे आएँ।

जतिन ने 1906 ई० में ही विदेशी सरकारों से और विदेशों में रह रहे भारतीयों से संपर्क जोड़ना शुरू कर दिया था। स्थायी संपर्क बनाए रखने के काम में सबसे बड़ी बाधा आ रही थी धन की। धन की कमी की कठिनाई को दूर करने में जतिन की जिस आदमी ने सहायता की उसका नाम था इंदुभूषण मित्रा। मित्रा एक सामंती रियासत में क्लर्क था। वह रियासत के एक लाख ग्यारह हज़ार रुपए जतिन को पकड़ा कर फ़रार हो गया। उसे शीघ्र ही पकड़कर कैद कर लिया गया और उसे कई तरह की यातनाएँ दी गईं, लेकिन उसने अपना भेद बिल्कुल नहीं खोला।

क्रांतिकारी दल में एक नौजवान था– एस.सेन। एक भेदिए दूत के रूप में उसे तत्काल जर्मनी भेज दिया गया। उसके सिर पर कई नाजुक परिस्थितियाँ मंडरा रही थीं। इन परिस्थितियों की रहस्यपूर्ण जानकारियाँ उसने एकत्रित कीं और वह प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध के शुरू होने से पहले ही भारत लौट आया। इन रहस्यपूर्ण जानकारियों के आधार पर यहाँ के क्रांतिकारियों को अपने भावी कार्यक्रमों की रूपरेखा तैयार करने में बड़ी मदद मिली।

अपने उद्देश्यों और अपनी कोशिशों को पूरा करने के लिए जतिन कलकत्ता स्थित जर्मन-कौंसल-जनरल से कई बार मिला और उनसे आवश्यक सहायता-सहयोग लिया। कौंसल-जनरल ने जर्मन सरकार की नीति के अनुसार उसे प्रोत्साहित भी किया। अमरीका, होनोलूलू, बताविया, मनीला आदि देशों में स्थित जर्मन मिशनों को सलाह दी गई कि वे भारतीय क्रांतिकारियों की हर तरह से मदद करें।

इन्हीं दिनों **सैन फ्रांसिस्को** में लाला हरदयाल ने "गदर" नाम की एक पत्रिका का प्रकाशन शुरू किया। हरदयाल जी के काम में उनकी सहायता करने के लिए जतिन ने तारकदास नाम के एक आदमी को अमरीका भेज दिया। **बरकत उल्ला** टोकियो विश्वविद्यालय में प्रोफेसर थे। उन्होंने "गदर" के प्रचार अधिकारी के रूप में काम करने के लिए अपनी नौकरी छोड़ दी। एक वरिष्ठ क्रांतिकारी के.सी घोष ने उन दिनों की याद करते हुए लिखा है– "ये भारत के लिए गर्व और शान के दिन थे। भारत से बाहर जो लोग भारत की स्वतंत्रता के लिए काम कर रहे थे उनके हृदय में जाति, नस्ल, क्षेत्रीयता की भावना अथवा किसी

विशेष पार्टी के प्रति लगाव जैसी कोई भावना नहीं थी। हर आदमी अपनी अस्मिता की पहचान और अपनी रुचियों को ताक पर रखकर एक महान सामूहिक उद्देश्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए जुटा हुआ था। सभी लोग पूरे आत्मविश्वास के साथ एक राष्ट्रवाद की भावना से ओतप्रोत होकर काम कर रहे थे।"

भारत के स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन में सहायता पहुँचाने के लिए भारत से बाहर के देशों में जितनी भी संस्थाएँ काम कर रही थीं उन सबकी सूचनाएँ यहाँ के क्रांतिकारियों तक पहुँचती रहती थीं। यहाँ के क्रांतिकारियों ने कलकत्ता में आयात-निर्यात की एक "हैरी एंड कंपनी" नामक फर्म खोल ली जिसकी आड़ मे ये लोग विदेशों से धन, सूचनाएँ और हथियार प्राप्त किया करते थे।

जतिन के मित्र भारत के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में फैल गए। योजना बनाई गई कि बड़े पैमाने पर विद्रोह कर दिया जाए। हालाँकि ये काम बड़े गुप्त तरीके से किए जा रहे थे, लेकिन इनमें से कुछ की भनक पुलिस के कानों में भी पड़ गई। इस विद्रोह-कार्यक्रम का सरगना जतिन ही था – यह सिद्ध करने के लिए पुलिस ने काफी सबूत इकट्ठे कर लिए थे। पुलिस ने एक बार फिर जतिन को गिरफ़्तार करने का फैसला कर लिया, लेकिन उन्हें जतिन का कही कोई पता ठिकाना नहीं मिला।

पुलिस जतिन को खोजने में लग गई। बहुत से इश्तहार प्रकाशित करवाए गए और घोषणा की गई कि जो कोई भी जतिन की गिरफ्तारी के बारे में किसी भी तरह की सूचना देगा, उसे आकर्षक पुरस्कार दिया जाएगा। जतिन के साथियो ने उसे सूचित कर दिया कि वह अपनी सुरक्षा के बारे मे अब अधिक सतर्क रहे। सभी की यह राय बनी कि जतिन जितनी जल्दी कलकत्ता छोड़ सके, उतना ही अच्छा रहेगा।

जतिन ने अपनी सुरक्षा के लिए तो नहीं, लेकिन कलकत्ता छोड़ दिया। हथियारों और गोला-बारूद से लदे कुछ विदेशी जहाज़ भारतीय तट पर पहुँचने वाले थे। सामान उतारने के लिए उड़ीसा के बालासोर तट को अधिक उपयुक्त समझा गया। बुध बालंगा नदी के मुहाने पर जहाज़ गुप्त रूप से अपना सामान उतार सकता था तथा हथियारों और गोला-बारूद को निकटवर्ती पहाड़ों और जंगलों में सुरक्षापूर्वक इकट्ठा किया जा सकता था।

: 3 :

उड़ीसा के बालासोर शहर से पैंतालीस किलोमीटर पश्चिम में काप्तीपाद के निकट गोपालडीह नामक स्थान पर एक छोटे-से सामंती राज्य का मुख्यालय था। जतिन यहाँ चला आया। 1915 ई. में यहाँ एक

छोटा-सा बाज़ार था। जतिन अपने दो प्रमुख साथियों के साथ यहाँ रहने लगा। इनके नाम थे– चित्तप्रिय और मनोरंजन। इनके नीरेन और ज्योतिष नाम के दो और साथी भी थे जिन्होंने यहाँ से दस किलोमीटर दूर डेरा डाल रखा था।

यहाँ मानेन्द्र चक्रवर्ती नाम के एक सज्जन रहते थे जिन्हें इन लोगों से बड़ी सहानुभूति थी। उन्होंने इस इलाके की कुछ वन-भूमि लीज़ पर ले रखी थी। उन्होंने इन लोगों के लिए एक दुकान खोल दी ताकि ये लोग बिना किसी शक के अपनी गतिविधियाँ जारी रख सकें। ''यूनीवर्सल एम्पोरियम'' नामक साइकिलों की एक एजेंसी के जरिए ये लोग कलकत्ता के क्रांतिकारियों से अपना निरंतर संपर्क बनाए रखते थे।

जतिन और उसके साथियों ने अपने नाम बदल लिए थे। स्थानीय लोग जतिन को ''साधु बाबा'' कहकर पुकारने लगे थे। जरूरतमंद लोगों को खुलकर दान देने से और उनकी अनेक प्रकार से सहायता करने के कारण जतिन यहाँ के लोगों में बहुत लोकप्रिय हो चला था।

''मैवरिक'' नाम का एक जहाज जो पूरे-का-पूरा हथियारों से लदा हुआ था, अप्रैल में सैन-फ्रांसिस्को से रवाना हुआ।

किन्तु भाग्य ''मैवरिक'' के अभियान के विपरीत पड़ा। जासूसों को इस अभियान के बारे में पता चल गया और ब्रिटिश सरकार की किश्तियाँ इसके पीछे लग गईं। जब जहाज़ के कप्तान को यह निश्चय हो गया कि अब आमने-सामने के संघर्ष को अधिक समय तक टाल पाना संभव नहीं रह गया है तो उसने सारे कागज़ात, हथियार और गोले-बारूद को प्रशांत महासागर में फिकवा दिया और इस तरह जहाज खाली हो गया। अंत में जहाज़ को एक इंडोनेशियाई बंदरगाह पर रोक लिया गया।

यह समाचार जतिन तक भी पहुँच गया। उसने किसी तरह की निराशा प्रकट नहीं होने दी और कहा– ''हमारे लिए यह एक ईश्वरीय संकेत है। हमें अपने देश की स्वतंत्रता अपने ही प्रयासों से प्राप्त करनी होगी, बाहरी मदद से नहीं।''

इसका यह अर्थ नहीं कि जतिन ने अपने सभी बाहरी संपर्कों को छोड़ दिया हो। उसने अपने दो प्रमुख साथियों को फिर से **बताविया** दौड़ाया और जर्मन सरकार को हथियारों और गोले-बारूद सहित दो और जहाज़ भेजने के लिए प्रेरित किया।

इतने में जतिन की बहुत सरगर्मी से तलाश शुरू हो गई। एक मामले की जाँच-पड़ताल करते हुए पुलिस

को कलकत्ता की "हैरी एंड कंपनी" तथा बालासोर के "यूनीवर्सल एम्पोरियम" के बीच एक निश्चित संपर्क-सूत्र का पता चला। (हालाँकि "हैरी एंड कंपनी" के सत्य-आचरण पर उन्हें कोई संदेह नहीं था।)

4 सिंतबर 1915 ई. को भारत सरकार के सतर्कता विभाग के डी.आई.जी.जी.डी. डैनहम, पुलिस उपायुक्त चार्ल्स टेगार्ट (जिन्हें बाद में "सर" की उपाधि दी गई) तथा पुलिस अधीक्षक एल.एन. बर्ड बालासोर पहुँच गए। उन्होंने "यूनीवर्सल एम्पोरियम" की बारीकी से खोजबीन की। उस जाँच-पड़ताल में विशेष महत्व की कोई जानकारी उनके हाथ नहीं लगी और हतोत्साहित होकर वे रवाना होने वाले ही थे कि उनकी निगाह कागज़ के एक टुकड़े पर पड़ी जिस पर घसीट में "काप्तीपाद" लिखा हुआ था। हालाँकि एम्पोरियम में जिस प्रकार का व्यापार होता था उसे देखते हुए काप्तीपाद नाम के स्थान की कोई प्रासंगिकता उन्हें नज़र नहीं आई, फिर भी उन्होंने इस स्रोत की भी जाँच-पड़ताल कर लेने का निर्णय कर लिया।

बालासोर, नीलगिरि और मयूरभंज की पुलिस डिवीज़नों को चौकस रहने के लिए कहकर वे अफ़सर काप्तीपाद के लिए रवाना हो गए। 6 सिंतबर को जतिन ने स्वयं उन्हें देखा। घनघोर बारिश हो रही थी। इन लोगों के आगमन का उद्देश्य भाँपने में जतिन को बिल्कुल देर नहीं लगी।

एक जंगली क्षेत्र में जतिन की एकांत कुटिया बनी हुई थी। इन अफ़सरों ने दूसरे दिन स्थानीय एस.डी.ओ. और उसके दल को साथ लेकर सवेरे-सवेरे जतिन की कुटिया को घेर लिया। दरवाज़ा भीतर से बंद था। अब दरवाजे को तोड़कर कौन खोले ? खतरे की पूरी-पूरी संभावनाएँ थीं, इसलिए साहब लोगों ने इस काम पर एक भारतीय अधिकारी को लगा दिया।

उसने तोड़कर दरवाजा खोल दिया। कुछ पुस्तकें, दवाइयों का एक डिब्बा और थोड़ा-सा गन-पाउडर छोड़कर उन्हें भीतर कुछ भी नहीं मिला। कुटिया के पिछले हिस्से में उन्हें एक संकेत पट्ट मिला जिस पर गोलियाँ चला-चलाकर निशाना साधने का काफी अभ्यास किया गया था।

साहब लोग हताश हो गए। उन्होने मानेन्द्र चक्रवर्ती का घर खोज लिया और उससे सवालो पर सवाल पूछने लगे। मानेन्द्र ने केवल यही उत्तर दिया कि "बाबू लोग" शिकार के लिए बाहर गए हुए हैं।

तभी पुलिस उपायुक्त ने सिपाहियों और चौकीदारों को आदेश दिया कि वे चारों ओर भागदौड़ करें और गाँववालों को बताएँ कि कुख्यात डाकुओं का एक दल कैद से छूटकर भाग निकला है। इन डाकुओं की गिरफ्तारी में सहायक हो सकनेवाली किसी भी प्रकार की सूचना देनेवाले को दस हज़ार रुपए का इनाम देने की घोषणा भी कर दी गई।

''दस हज़ार रुपए'' के इनाम की घोषणा लोगों तक पहुँचाते-पहुँचाते बढ़कर ''दस लाख'' की हो गई। काप्तीपाद के जंगलों को छान डाला गया लेकिन साहबों की सब कोशिशें बेकार रहीं। हथियार-बंद पुलिस के साथ-साथ डैनहम तो काप्तीपाद की चौकसी करते रहे, उनके दूसरे साथी बालासोर लौट आए ताकि वे अपनी मायूस खोजें जारी रखने के लिए पर्याप्त शक्ति जुटा सकें।

अधिकारी लोग निरन्तर खोजबीन करते रहे। पहरेदार लोग जतिन की कुटिया पर और चक्रवर्ती के घर पर लगातार अपनी निगाह बनाए रखते थे। इतना होने पर भी जतिन आधी रात के समय चक्रवर्ती को धन्यवाद देने के लिए और उससे अलविदा कहने के लिए उसके घर आ पहुँचा।

वे सारी रात पैदल चलते रहे। 8 सितंबर को सवेरे तक पुलिस काप्तीपाद से बालासोर तक अपना जाल बिछा चुकी थी।

इसलिए चित्तप्रिय और मनोरंजन ने अश्रुपूरित नेत्रों से अपने प्रिय नेता जतिन से प्रार्थना की कि हमें हमारे भाग्य के भरोसे छोड़ दीजिए और अपनी स्वयं की हिफ़ाजत कीजिए। इन लोगों को इस बात में कोई संदेह नहीं था कि अकेले होने पर जतिन सरलता से बचकर निकल सकता है। उन्होंने कहा– ''दादा, यदि आप जिंदा बच रहेंगे तो हम हर काम फिर से संगठित कर सकेंगे।

लेकिन जतिन हर बार एक दयालु बड़े भाई की तरह केवल मुस्कराकर रह जाता। अपने दल के शेष दो साथियों को अगले कैंप से लेने-के लिए ये लोग आगे बढ़े चले जा रहे थे। फिर पाँचों साथी आगे बढ़ने लगे।

जो लोग उनका पीछा कर रहे थे उन लोगो ने बाद में स्वीकार किया कि जतिन और उसके साथियों ने रास्ते में पड़ने वाली अनेक पुलिस-चौकियों को कितनी होशियारी से पार किया, यह सचमुच बड़े आश्चर्य की बात थी। ये लोग अन्ततः मौत के घेरे को भी तोड़ डालते यदि ग्रामीण भाइयों में उनके डाकू होने का सनसनीपूर्ण समाचार पहले से न फैला दिया गया होता।

बालासोर में ऐसे लोग भी थे जो किसी भी खतरे की कीमत पर इन लोगों को शरण दे सकते थे अथवा इनके भाग निकलने में पूरी सहायता कर सकते थे। किन्तु इन शरणार्थियों की हकीकत को जानने-समझने का उन्हें कोई अवसर ही नहीं मिल पाया।

जल्दी ही वहाँ भीड़ इकट्ठी हो गई, लेकिन भीड़ किंकर्तव्यविमूढ़ थी। अब तक इस समूह की संदेहास्पद

गतिविधियों की सूचना पुलिस स्टेशन तक भी पहुँच चुकी थी।

पुलिस का एक सब-इंसपैक्टर भी वहाँ आ पहुँचा और उसने जतिन की कलाई पकड़ ली लेकिन जतिन ने उसे भीड़ में पीछे की ओर धकेल दिया।

इन लोगों के सामने फिर से नदी आ पड़ी। वहाँ कोई नाव नहीं थी। बहुत कठिनाइयों का सामना करते हुए इन लोगों ने अपने हथियारों और गोले-बारूद की पोटलियों को पानी से ऊपर उठाए-उठाए नदी पार की।

एक गाँव था–चासखंड। इस गाँव की बाहरी सीमा पर चारों ओर मिट्टी के टीले, घनी झाड़ियाँ एवं छोटी-छोटी पहाड़ियाँ थीं। इन लोगों ने फैसला किया कि अंतिम परीक्षा के लिए वे वहीं इंतजार करेंगे।

जतिन के साथियों ने फिर उसे एक अवसर दिया कि वह अकेला भागकर निकल जाए और पुलिस उन्हीं से उलझती रहे। इन लोगों से नेता जतिन ने उनके इस सुझाव के प्रति धन्यवाद दिया लेकिन वह टस से मस नहीं हुआ।

बालासोर की तलहटी में युद्ध की ज़ोरदार तैयारियाँ हो रही थीं। बचकर भाग निकलनेवाले इन लोगों की ख़बर सबसे पहले पुलिस अधीक्षक को मिली। वह भागा-भागा किल्बी नाम के एक जिला मजिस्ट्रेट के पास पहुँचा जो कि अभी-अभी काप्तीपाद से लौटकर आया था। फौजी-पड़ाव के प्रूफ डिपार्टमेंट के सार्जेंट रुदरफोर्ड के पास ये दोनों लोग भागे-भागे पहुँचे। हथियार बंद पुलिस और सेना तीन समूहों में बँट गई और उसने चासखंड की ओर मार्च कर दिया।

दोपहर के अंत तक वे लोग एक गाँव तक ही पहुँच पाए होंगे कि एक जासूस ने पहाड़ी की तरफ इशारा कर दिया। किल्बी की पार्टी उधर की ओर चल दी। बहुत सारे लोग सुरक्षित दूरी पर खड़े-खड़े इस "आपरेशन" को देख रहे थे। न्यायाधीश टी.सी. मैकफरसन के सामने किल्बी ने अपने बयान में कहा कि बागियों को चेतावनी देने के लिए उसने पहले-पहल गोली चलाई। दरअसल किल्बी का अनुमान था कि भूख, नींद और थकान से हारे-थके ये लोग बिना किसी विरोध के आत्म-समर्पण कर देंगे। बागी सिर्फ पाँच थे। यदि बागी पचास भी होते तो भी उन्हे महसूस हो गया होता कि यह युद्ध बराबरी का युद्ध नहीं होने जा रहा।

बागियों ने आत्म-समर्पण करने का कोई संकेत नहीं दिया। किल्बी किंकर्तव्यविमूढ़ रह गया। जैसे ही **रुदरफोर्ड** अपने सिपाहियों के साथ वहाँ पहुँचा, किल्बी ने उससे उसकी राय पूछी। **रुदरफोर्ड** ने गोलियाँ

बरसाते हुए आगे बढ़ने का सुझाव दिया।

उन्होंने वैसा ही किया। अपनी पहली गोलियों का तो उन्हें जवाब नहीं मिला। अतः पुलिस के लोग अपनी कुहनियों के बल झाड़-झंखाड़ों से होते हुए घिसट-घिसटकर आगे बढ़ने लगे।

किल्बी और रुदरफोर्ड की धारणा थी कि जतिन और उसके साथियों के पास केवल पिस्तौलें होंगी, क्योंकि ये लोग नदी के इस पास से बंदूकें तो अपने साथ ले नहीं जा सके होंगे। उनकी यह धारणा तब तो और भी पक्की हो गई जब उनकी गोलियों का दूसरी ओर से कोई जबाव ही नहीं मिला।

अब सिपाहियों को पहाड़ी पर चढ़ने का आदेश हुआ। पहाड़ी की चोटी पर जतिन और उसके साथी हमला करने की ताक में पहाड़ी की ही तरह निश्चल लेटे हुए थे।

जतिन और उसके साथियों की रण-नीति को समझने में किल्बी और रुदरफोर्ड को बहुत देर लग गई।

ऊपर चढ़ते-चढ़ते जैसे ही सिपाही इन लोगों की मार-सीमा में पहुँचे, इन लोगों ने उन पर गोलीबारी शुरू कर दी। आगे बढ़ते जा रहे इस दल की अग्रिम पंक्ति के सिपाही धड़ाम-धड़ाम लुढकते-पुढ़कते नीचे गिरने लगे। इससे पहले कि ये लोग दुबारा सिपाहियों पर गोलियाँ बरसाना शुरू कर दें, सिपाहियो को जल्दी ही ऊपर चढ़ जाने का आदेश दे दिया गया। किंतु जतिन ने उन्हें तनिक भी मोहलत नहीं लेने दी। शत्रुओं का नाश करने के लिए पहाड़ के ऊपर से बादलों की गडगड़ाहट और बिजली की चमक के समान गोलियों की वर्षा होती रही और सिपाहियों को एक बार फिर हताश होकर लौटना पड़ा।

अधिकारियों को आशा थी कि उन्हें आगे बढ़ने से रोकने का प्रयास किया जाएगा, किंतु उनका यह अनुमान ठीक नहीं निकला। पलभर को तो वे ठगे-से रह गए, किंतु निराशा की स्थिति में उन्होंने तत्काल ही एक फैसला कर लिया। यदि इस बार फिर से उन्हें आगे बढ़ने से रोका गया तो जतिन और उसके साथियों को जो हानि पहुँचेगी या उन्हें जिन कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ेगा, उसे वे लोग शायद ही बर्दाश्त कर सकेंगे। अधिकारियों ने इस बात पर ध्यान दिए बगैर कि उनके कितने आदमी मारे जाएँगे, इसी बात में अपनी सफलता समझी कि बागियों का गोला-बारूद शीघ्र ही समाप्त करा दिया जाए।

अधिकारियों ने अपने सिपाहियों को पहाड़ी पर चढ़ जाने का आदेश दे दिया। इन सिपाहियों ने अपनी पूरी ताकत से धुआँधार गोलियाँ बरसाना शुरू कर दिया। इस पहाड़ी पर उनके सैनिकों की निगाह बनी रहे, इस उद्देश्य से उन्होंने नज़दीक से पेड़ों पर कुछ सिपाहियों को राइफलों सहित चढ़ा दिया।





न घंटे तक आमने-सामने का युद्ध चलता रहा। यह युद्ध कुछ देर और भी चालू रखा जा सकता था, किंतु ागी लोगों के हाथ में जितना गोला-बारूद था वह समाप्त हो चुका था। बागी लोग गोले-बारूद से भरा ापना दूसरा नया थैला खोलने ही जा रहे थे कि उन्हें पता चला कि उनके थैले की चाबी कहीं खो गई है। ले का चमडा इतना मोटा था कि उसे फाड़ पाना संभव नहीं हो सका। बागी लोग थैले से जूझ ही रहे थे ; एक सिपाही ने पास के पेड़ से चित्तप्रिय पर गोली दाग दी। लहूलुहान चित्तप्रिय की मृत्यु हो गई।

तिन का भी एक हाथ बेकार हो गया था और उसकी छाती से खून बहे जा रहा था। जतिन ने चित्तप्रिय को ापनी ओर खींचकर उसका सिर अपनी गोद मे रख लिया और गोली चलाना जारी रखा।

ीघ्र ही बागियों का गोला-बारूद समाप्त हो गया। जतिन बहुत बुरी तरह घायल हो गया था। पहाड़ी की ोटी पर सन्नाटा छा गया। जब अधिकारियों को यकीन हो गया कि यह सन्नाटा गोला-बारूद खत्म हो ाने के कारण ही है तो वे पहाड़ी पर चढ़ गए।

ातिन प्यासा था। किल्बी ने शीघ्र ही अपने हैलमेट में पानी भरा और मरणासन्न को सादर भेंट किया। ातिन ने सधन्यवाद जल ग्रहण किया।

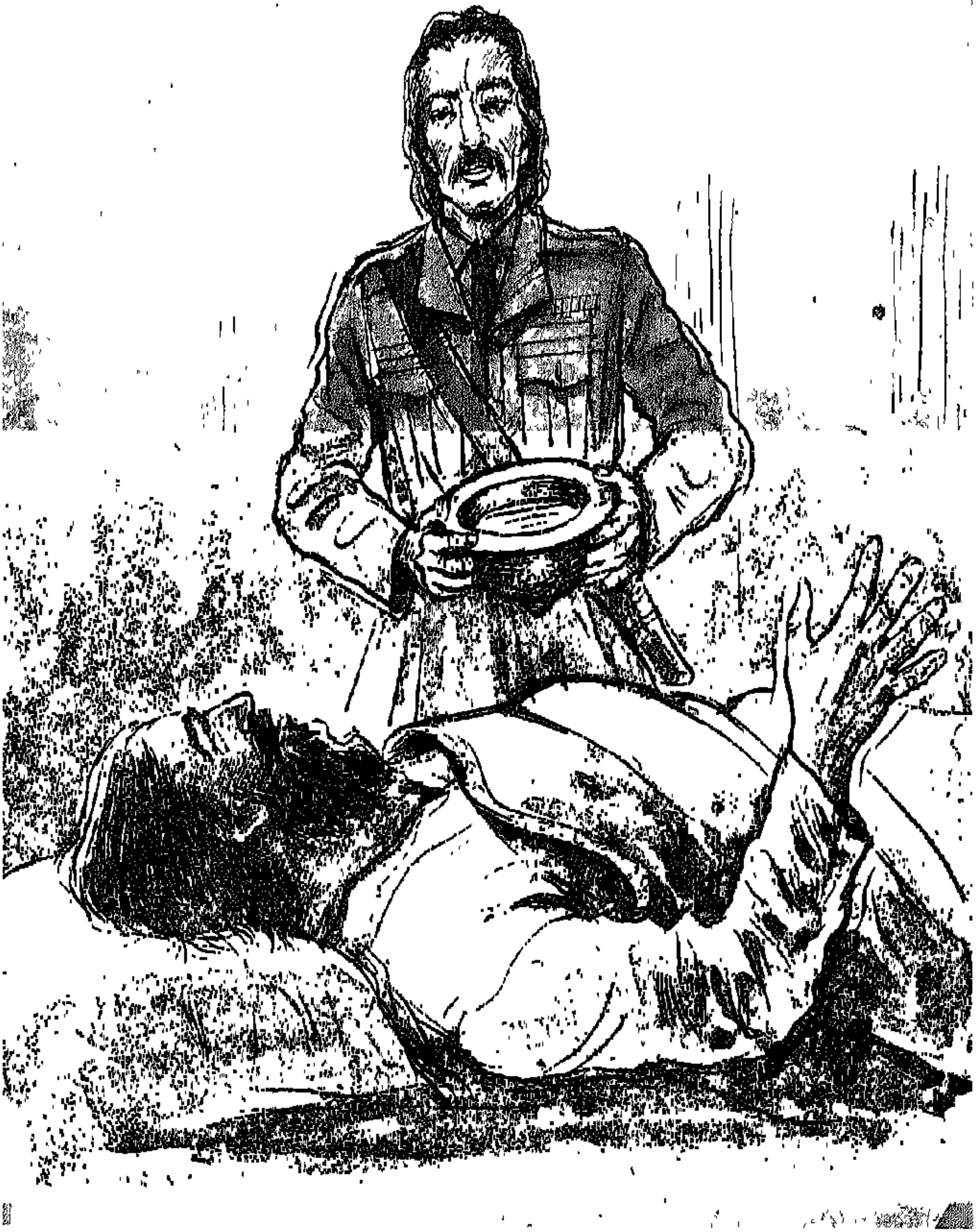
ाम का समय था। युद्ध में हताहत लोगों को शहर के अस्तपताल में ले जाया गया। पानी बरस रहा था। िल्बी ने जतिन को अपना कोट उढ़ा रखा था। सारे रास्ते जतिन को होश बना रहा।

िल्बी ने पूछा–"मि. मुखर्जी, क्या आप कुछ कह रहे हैं?" "हाँ", जतिन ने उत्तर दिया। "कृपया इस बात ा ध्यान रखिए कि मेरे साथियों के साथ किसी प्रकार का कोई अन्याय न हो। जो कुछ हुआ है उसके लिए ेवल मैं ही जिम्मेदार हूँ।"

ातिन ने एक बार फिर अपना अनुरोध दोहराया। जतिन का आप्रेशन किया जाना था। उसके पेट में कुछ ोलियाँ धँस गई थीं। आपरेशन सफल हुआ। उस रात जतिन की देखभाल में व्यस्त रहने के बाद किल्बी ौर दूसरे अधिकारियों को चैन की साँस मिली।

0 सितंबर 1915 ई. को सवेरे पता चला कि जतिन के टाँके ढीले पड़ते जा रहे हैं। जतिन की साँस टूटती ा रही थी।

.ार्ल्स टैगार्ट ने जो कि बालासोर चले गए थे, संकोचभरी आवाज़ में पूछा– "मुझे बताओ, मुखर्जी, क्या



मैं आपके लिए कुछ कर सकता हूँ?"

जतिन मुस्कराया और बोला– "कुछ नहीं, धन्यवाद। सब कुछ खत्म होता जा रहा है। अलविदा।"

बाद में चार्ल्स टैगार्ट ने कहा– "मैं एक सबसे अधिक बहादुर भारतीय से मिला, किंतु मुझे अपना कर्तव्य भी तो पूरा करना था।"

कुछ समय बाद नीरेन और मनोरंजन को फाँसी दे दी गई। "ब्रिटिश राज हटाओ"– यही इन लोगों का आखिरी कहना था।

ज्योतिष को अंडमान भेज दिया गया। बाद में बहरामपुर जेल में उसकी मृत्यु हो गई। जतिन के लिए अपनी श्रद्धांजलि के रूप में उसने जेल की दीवार पर उकेर-उकेरकर कुछ लिखा भी था। यही उसका अंतिम कार्य था।

बाघा जतिन अमर हो गया। कुछ साल बाद 9 सितंबर 1923 के दिन बाघा की स्मृति में भगतसिंह ने पंजाब में शहीद-दिवस मनाया।

अपने एक गीत में नज़रूल इस्लाम ने बालासोर के इस युद्ध को "नए भारत की हल्दीघाटी" कहा।

चासखंड जानेवाली जिस सड़क पर पुलिस ने जतिन का पीछा किया था, आज उस सड़क का नाम "बाघा जतिन रोड" है। यह सड़क देश का पवित्रतम स्थान है।

●

a return visit to the Mahārānā, when he received the usual presents

That very day, the 6th of January 1792, Mahādji began his return march from Mewār, being accompanied by Ambāji Inglé and other troops up to Pratāpgarh (60 miles south of Chitor), which was reached in three days Here he halted till the 13th, trying to collect tribute from the chiefs of Pratāpgarh and the neighbouring States Then, dismissing Ambāji Inglé and his contingent for their post near Chitor, he resumed his march on the 13th and reached Ujjain (his northern capital) on 21st January (*DY* S. 83, 57.)

§ 14 *Reflections on Rajput decadence.*

The Rajputs represented the noblest elements of the Hindu character, and the saddest aspect of the fall of the Delhi empire was, to my mind, the utter degradation of this chivalrous race and the hopeless misery of this "Land of Rajas" The rot in their body politic started from its head Each Rajput State was founded by the martial chieftain of a particular clan who entered the country at the head of his armed clansmen and seized some hill fort and made it the seat of his power All around this centre the heads of the different branches of the same clan established their baronies by conquering as much land as they could with the help of their own family groups. Unlike the barons under the feudal system in Europe, the Rajput nobles did not owe their estates and rank to their Raja's will, but they obeyed him because they were his younger brothers or rather cousins by blood, and he was their patriarch. Thus a Rajput Raja could control his barons only when he was a born leader of men, a victor in battles and possessed of the power of bending others to his will A weak or idiotic Rajput Raja was powerless against his nobles, and in his reign the unhappy country was ravaged and public order was overthrown by groups of related clan-branches in the same country fighting against each other

and trying to usurp the control of the Government so as to be able to seize their neighbours' lands or the Crown estate.*

Unfortunately after the death of Ishwari Singh of Jaipur (1750) and Bakht Singh of Jodhpur (1752), the line of warrior Rajahs ended, and the rulers of all the Rajput States in the second half of the 18th century were sometimes helpless minors, sometimes imbeciles, and often worthless drunkards and sensualists

When the throne ceased to be filled by a warrior-king, quarrels for acting as his regent and controlling the Government broke out among factions in the royal family or the barons Besides, there were many disputed successions to the throne among brothers or adopted sons, and sometimes pretenders rose up claiming to be the late king's posthumous sons Their civil wars invited foreign intervention The faction that had seized power appealed for support to the Peshwā or to the Peshwā's local agent Holkar The opposite faction immediately sent an embassy to punā—or more often to Holkar's local rival Sindhia, offering a higher subsidy to deprive their rival of Maratha aid Each side made frantic bids of money, like desperate gamblers, though they knew well that it was impossible for them to pay even a hundredth part of the promised sum out of the revenue of that war-ravaged small stony or desert country Thus, each Rajput State in the last quarter of the 18th century had piled up on paper a debt to the Marathas which sold them like insolvents to their creditors The Maratha Government had hired out their troops and undergone heavy expenditure in Rajputana and naturally expected payment of what was legally subsidy and not tribute But the country was soon drained dry, and no

* Each of these septs or branches was descended from a common ancestor, usually a younger son or grandson of the founder of the dynasty, and is known by the addition of the syllable *ot* to the name of this ancestor, such as Chundā-ot, Shaktā-ot, Khangār-ot,—like the Irish prefix *O'*,—for example O'Donnell, O'Brien or the sons of Donnel or Burn, and the Scottish prefix *Mac*

part of these promised subsidies could be realised unless a Maratha army visited the State to enforce the claim It was exactly the same phenomenon which was seen in Oudh under the decadent Nawabs, when the land revenue of a district could not be collected unless a battalion of troops with a couple of guns accompanied the tax-gatherer. These Maratha troops lived on the country and their salary became an addition to the originally promised subsidy, thus deepening the insolvency of the Rajput State.

In such a world the state-craft of the Rajput ministers consisted in playing one Maratha general in Hindustan off against another, *i e*, Holkar against Sindhia, so as to gain time and evade the payment of their just debts to the Peshwā This was exactly the game played by Abdul Hamid the last ruling Sultan of Turkey who for many years staved off the overthrow of his rule by shrewdly manipulating the rivalry between England and Russia In 1791 the diwān of Jaipur likened this Holkar-Sindhia rivalry to a combat between two wild elephants, which he was watching from a safe distance, and he frankly said that he would discharge his Raja's debt only after one of these two Maratha chiefs had asserted his superiority over the other beyond question

A proposal for handing over one Rajput State to Sindhia and anoher to Holkar exclusively, and banning the entry of each into the other's sphere of influence, did not work. On 21st July 1791, Kāshi Rao Holkar wrote to Ahalyā Bāi—"I sent to Sindhia's local agent to propose that when certain *thānas* in Jodhpur are ceded by their Raja, our officers should take up the administration there equally with Sindhia's. He declined and said,—"Jodhpur State is ours (as the result of the victory at Meṛtā and the consequent submission of its Raja), and here no *thāna* of yours can be allowed" I retorted, "Jaipur State is our sphere of influence, why then have you posted your own *thānas* there?" His explanation was, "In Jaipur the Peshwa has a claim to the subsidy, and for that reason we

have planted our *thānas*" (*Chandrachur Daftar,* Vol II let No 80)

In fact, the hoarded wealth of the Rajas of Rajputana was a myth and the Marathas took many years to realise this fact The story had spread that Sawāi Jai Singh of Jaipur and Abhay Singh of Mārwār, during their viceroyalties of Mālwā and Gujrāt respectively in the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah, had accumulated many krores of Rupees The story was confirmed by the laudatory poems of the Rajput bards, each of whom exaggerated his patron's riches in order to flatter him The sober reality can be judged from the fact that while the standard income of the Jaipur State was a hundred lakhs in 1743, it had sunk to 16 lakhs in 1818 when the English undertook its protection In 1786 the Jaipur diwān Khush-hāli Rām Bohrā told Mahādji Sindhiā,—"You demand the payment of 60 lakhs of Rupees as our debt We have not even sixty lakhs of broken potsherds in our Treasury How can we pay so many Rupees?" (*DY* i 163)

The march of time had now brought another infliction down on the Rajput race War is the only profession of the Rajput gentry Even when the poorer men of their clans lived by agriculture, they had the manual labour done by lower castes and kept themselves ready to follow their landlords to battle But the old Indian method of warfare in which the Rajputs charged in a tumultuous body and engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand fight with their swords, had proved futile before fire arms Sindhia's general De Boigne by his two victories in 1790—the first at Patan in Jaipur territory (20 June) and the second at Meitā in Jodhpur (10 September), had proved beyond doubt that the bravest Rajput cavalry was powerless before quick-firing guns and disciplined musketeers Under the sense of their own military inferiority, the Rajput Rajas made a pathetic attempt to hire some thing to match Sindhia's European-trained brigades

The Rajas now began, for the first time, to hire foreign

mercenaries, who were popularly called Sindhis, but lived exactly like the *condottieri* of Italy in the Middle Ages "These hired bands were entirely composed of infantry, having a slight knowledge of European tactics . . These guards were composed either of Purbiā Rajputs (*i e*, Oudh and Buxar men), Sindhis, Arabs or Rohillas" (Tod, ii Marwar, ch xiii) A little later, following the example of Sindhia and Holkar, even Jaipur and Kotā engaged French mercenary captains and ordered them to raise trained battalions, but with no real success These men could not rival De Boigne's achievement, and their inefficient troops, by their heavy pay-bill, only increased their Raja's insolvency and disorder in his realm

The moral decay of Rajput society completed the ruin of their country We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the custom of domestic concubinage, though very ancient in its origin, now produced only the most degrading effect upon the Rajput character These warriors had no superiority to the pampered princes and grandees of the Mughal Court in their relations with women. In the unhappy kingdom of Jodhpur, the administration was entirely dominated by a royal mistress of the Oswāl caste, while the King lived as a non entity In Jaipur, Jagat Singh who reigned from 1803 to 1818, had "the disgraceful distinction of being the most dissolute prince of his race or of his age" (Tod ii Amber, ch III) Their legitimate queens, though daughters of kings, were daily insulted by the domination of women of infamous character, and felt themselves powerless to relieve the misery of their subjects We have now come far away from the age in which Rajput queens had fought on horseback to repel foreign invaders.*

Land was the only source of wealth and of social status among the Rajputs So long as the Mughal empire was expanding, the Rajas and barons of Rajasthan could carve

* It was a most painful surprise to me to learn from the Marathi despatches that many of the Rajput Rajas, nobles and ministers were infected by the filthy unmentionable disease which is Nature's punishment for gross licentiousness

out new estates for themselves and their younger sons by service under the banners of Delhi But in the middle of the 18th century, the Emperor became a mere shadow, and the Rajputs came to be cooped up within their small sterile districts, they had no means of advancement left to them except by devouring each other

Their education, or more correctly their lack of it, and rigid social usages made them unfit to face the changed world when European civilisation burst upon India. Their bards or *chārans*, whose poems used to throw Tod into ecstacy, only helped to ruin the Rajput kings and nobles by inflaming their pride of family or clan and antipathy to other races of Hindustan and even other Rajput clans than their own These false bardic poems blinded their Rajas and common people alike to the true lessons of history The universal habit of opium-eating made them incapable of sustained exertion and debased their brains permanently

The system of subsidiary alliances enforced by Wellesley, was condemned by Sir Thomas Munro in a letter to the Duke of Wellington on the ground that it robbed the oppressed subjects of a protected Indian prince of their natural remedy of rebellion But the period immediately following the acceptance of British protection showed that the subsidiary alliances at least gave internal peace to Rajputana by preventing baronial turbulence, disputes about succession, and mutiny by disorderly mercenary troops. We can legitimately claim that during the short time that Mahadji Sindhia was present in or near Rajputana with his invincible army, he did give to that country the first faint beginning of *Pax Britannica* When he left for the Deccan in January 1792, chaos was let loose again for a short time; Jaipur attacked its now independent former vassal, the Rao Raja of Alwar, with Holkar's help But the trouble was put down by Sindhia's local agents, who also gave peace to Mewar for nearly eight years

The tragedy of Rajputana in the period embraced in this history, was only the result of the modern age bursting

upon a sleepy inert mediæval society, that could make no attempt to adjust itself to the necessary change This ancient people found that its virtues and vices alike led to its ruin in a strange new world Bengal and Bihar lost their independence in 1757, but within twenty years a modern civilised system of administration was given to these provinces, and only sixty years after Plassey English education was being given to the grandsons of the vanquished in that battle For Rajputana there was no such Renaissance, no modernisation for a century and a half after Plassey, though there was internal peace under British paramountcy. Hence the regeneration of the Rajputs has been extremely slow and imperfect

CHAPTER XL

SINDHIA-HOLKAR RIVALRY

§ 1 *How the Sindhias surpassed the Holkars in the second generation*

For the origins of the Sindhia-Holkar rivalry we have to go back sixty years to the days of the great Baji Rao, under whom the first Holkar and the first Sindhia made their names in Maratha history Malhar Rao Holkar started earlier in the race for greatness and he gained a higher rank in the Peshwā's army than Rānoji Sindhia could do before his death

The family chronicle of the Holkars claims that Malhar's early patronage laid the foundations of the future greatness of the humble Ranoji Sindhia and that, in the second generation the same Malhar's influence saved the life of the young Mahadji Sindhia when the latter's death was ordered by Raghunath Dādā, the Peshwa's regent Whatever doubt there may be as to these claims, the fact is indisputable that during the first generation the Holkars stood much higher on the ladder of greatness than the Sindhias

Malhar Holkar outlived Ranoji Sindhia by 21 years, and he was the sole "Elder statesman" of the Maratha State left after the Panipat disaster But after his death in 1766, the relative position of the two houses came to be reversed. Malhar left no worthy son or nephew behind him, while the Sindhia family gained parity with the house of Holkar by the blood and sweat of Ranoji's sons Ranoji had died early (in 1745) and left them young, but they were young lions four of his sons (or five, if we add a grandson) died on active service, while the fifth son was wounded and crippled in combat And now, in less than six years after

Malhar's death the house of Sindhia rose to the front rank in Maratha politics under a son of Ranoji. This regenerator of the fortunes of the Sindhias was Mahadji, the sole survivor after Panipat among the sons of Ranoji He combined Malhar Holkar's leadership in war with a shrewdness in diplomacy and a long vision in politics which no Maratha chief before or after him could surpass At the outset of his career (about 1768) his resources in men, money and lands were poorer than those of the house of Holkar, whose wealth and influence were being immensely increased by the long peaceful and beneficent rule of a saintly widow, Ahalyā Bāi But by the year 1782, when the Treaty of Salbai was signed, Mahadji had made himself clearly the foremost man in the Maratha State, and when a year later (December 1784) he secured for himself the regency of the Delhi Empire, there could be no doubt of his being the dominating figure of Indian politics It was a position which excited the jealousy of Nānā Fadnis and the heart-burning of the Holkar party

The curse of drunkenness lay heavy on the house of Holkar. Khandé Rao (the son of Malhar and the husband of Ahalyā Bāi), Tukoji and Tukoji's sons Malhar and Jaswant Rao were victims of this vice, and the affairs of these besotted masters were saved from ruin only by the prudent management of their Brahman ministers Ahalyā Bai was merely the banker of the family, a very successful banker no doubt, but she could not command in the field, nor control distant provinces; hence her virtues counted for nothing in the manly game of war Here the powerless and mutually quarrelsome ministers of ever-tipsy braggarts had to match themselves against a born leader of men like Mahadji Sindhia and his band of able generals Holkar's ministers knew the essential weakness of their position and avoided an *open* conflict with Sindhia as long as they could The inevitable clash was further delayed by the fact of Mahadji being under a cloud from the Lalsot campaign (1787) to Ghulām Qādir's expulsion from Delhi But when at the beginning of 1789, he recovered his position in the Delhi

imperial Government, the jealousy of Holkar was kindled again *

§ 2. *How Tukoji Holkar tried to thwart Mahadji Sindhia.*

The quarrel about the relative prestige of the two families might have been put to slumber or simmered harmlessly, but a source of more active friction was the Peshwā's faulty partition of the Maratha acquisitions in North India among his generals Here was something very material that had to be fought for No clear cut territorial division was made among these agents by the Puna Government, but Holkar and Sindhia—with sometimes the Pawār added—were told to collect different percentages of the tribute from the *same* prince in Rajputana or Malwa

Peace and effective collection of tribute from Rajputana could have been enforced only by the presence there of an officer of the Peshwā—such as his brother or uncle—with authority to override Holkar and Sindhia alike But such a legate plenipotentiary was not then available On the contrary, Nānā Fadnis, the regent of the boy Peshwā, almost openly set up Tukoji Holkar and Ali Bahadur to thwart Mahadji and humiliate him before the public in Hindustan

For example, when in August 1790, Mahadji Sindhia, in an atttempt to placate the Peshwā, secured from the Emperor of Delhi a *khilat* for the Peshwā and a *farmān* appointing the latter as the Imperial Regent (with Mahadji

* In November 1789, Mahādji Sindhiā, in view of his projected invasion of Rājputānā, did not deem it wise to keep both the other great Marātha chiefs then in the North estranged from him So, he gave Tukoji Holkar, as his share of the Marātha conquests in Hindustan, 15 mahals, besides promising him two others (namely Kosi and Shergarh) later These fifteen mahals were Garh Mukteshwar and three others on the bank of the upper Ganges, Khurjā, Sikandrā, Hāpur and four others in the middle Doab, and Dholpur, Achnerā and two others south of Agra Ali Bahādur was offered, but never actually put in possession of the Aligarh-Koil district, and his demand of 24 lakhs of Rupees a year for his military expenses could not possibly be complied with by Sindhiā, who gave merely evasive replies (Kālé Akhbārāt)

as his deputy in that office), and according to the practice of the Mughal Government a royal pavilion (technically called *farmān-bāri*) was erected outside Mathura to receive the imperial gifts with due honour and ceremony, and all the Maratha generals at the place were invited to attend, as they were bound in duty to do,—all came except Tukoji Holkar who sent his *diwān* to represent him, as if this officer was Sindhia's equal and Tukoji his superior Mahadji took this public insult to heart and vowed to oust the Holkar competition from Hindustan by increasing his army Rānā Khan pacified him

Every enemy of Mahadji Sindhia found shelter and support in Holkar's camp, whose close ally was Ali Bahadur, who had openly defied Mahadji at Mathurā in July 1789 and was now thwarting him in Bundelkhand Every Rajput prince who wanted to evade the payment of his tribute to Sindhia, sent his minister to Holkar to intrigue against Sindhia with Holkar's diwan In 1790 while Mahadji was openly campaigning against Ismail Beg and the Rajahs of Jaipur and Marwar, the envoys of these three enemy Powers were living in the camp of Tukoji though a very small contingent of Holkar's horse had been sent to Mahadji to assist in his campaign! Above all, every anti-Sindhia plot in Rajputana was hatched under Holkar's leadership The situation at last became intolerable, as Mahadji again and again complained to Nānā Fadnis, but the Regent of Puna took no action

The local Rajahs, seeing this incurable division among the Maratha authorities in Northern India, stiffened in their attitude and evaded paying their promised war contributions and the tribute due to the Emperor, knowing full well that adequate force could not be brought to bear on them

In fact, the hoarded wealth of the Rajput Governments had been grossly exaggerated in the imagination of the Marathas Their annual revenue even had sunk to one-third of the normal amount through lavish grants to the

feudal barons or usurpations by them and poor collection owing to maladministration and anarchy Hence a debtor State which Holkar's men had first sucked dry could yield nothing to Sindhia's collectors coming after This hunt for gold kept alive the quarrel between the two Maratha agents of the Peshwā in Hindustan

Apart from the jealous quarrel about parity in landed possessions and revenue between the houses of Sindhia and Holkar, there was a basic conflict of policy in their attitude to the Rajput princes We have seen how in the pre-Panipat days and even during the Maratha return to the North after that disaster, Malhar Rao Holkar I had always worked at cross purposes to Dattaji and Mahadji Sindhia While the Sindhias nursed a deadly feud with Najib-ud-daula's family, Malhar Holkar had made Najib his "adopted son" and always thwarted the Sindhias by supporting the Ruhela cause in the Peshwa's council and their joint operations in Hindustan

So, too, Tukoji Holkar now (1789) argued with Nānā Fadnis that unless the two great Rajput chiefs of Jaipur and Marwar were kept friendly (by relaxing Mahadji's pressure on them for the tribute due to the Peshwa), they would be driven for self-preservation to join the Mughalia party and thus raise against the Maratha position in the North a formidable opposition on two fronts at the same time Mahadji replied that the Rajputs would never come out of their own countries to fight elsewhere (*Aiti. Tip* iv 13)

Tukoji's idea of amity with the Rajputs amounted only to this that he would monopolise all the tribute and land surrenders made to the Maratha State by the Rajputs during Mahadji's absence from that scene, as his compensation for Sindhia's appropriating all the Maratha gains in the Agra-Delhi country and the Doab

In fact, the eternal conflict between these two irreconcilable interests ruined the Maratha hope of establishing an empire in the North The British-Indian leaders noticed this fact very early Resident W Palmer wrote on 23

March 1789.—"I do not think that joining in authority two Chiefs of such equal strength and discordant views as Sindhia and Holkar, is well calculated to ensure such a system. It is probably the expectation of the Puna darbār to preserve the influence of the State by the check which each Chief will be upon the other But in my opinion more will be lost by their dissensions than can be gained by the mutual jealousies, and that the Maratha interests are exposed to be totally annihilated by such a delegation to them" [PRC i Nos 246, 255]

§ 3 *Advocates of peace in the two rival Maratha camps*

Mahadji sincerely wished to live at peace with Holkar so long as peace was not rendered impossible by others, he avowed a life-long friendship with the Holkar family; Ahalya Bāi had been his friend in need with her loans, and he would not risk a rupture with the Peshwā by open war on another general of the Puna Government in Hindustan. His policy, equally wise and just, was to settle the Holkar-Sindhia differences peacefully by the superior award of the Peshwā.

Holkar's ministers, too, wished to avoid an open trial of strength with the victors of Patan and Mertā They knew the weakness of their own side But their captains could not be restrained from committing little mice-like mischiefs, such as plundering small convoys on the way to Sindhia's camp or looting villages within Sindhia's sphere of influence

Small places like Kāmā and other cities on the eastern and southern frontiers of the Alwar State, whose limits had not yet been firmly recognised became bones of contention between the roving generals of these two Maratha chiefs as their just rights there had not been clearly defined

Each of the rival camps had its peace party Mahadji Sindhia regarded an armed rupture with Holkar as a political blunder fatal to his far-ranging ambitious projects Tukoji

Holkar was too fond of drink to stir himself for anything else in the world ; "a flask of wine under a shady bough," by the side of a cool brook or lake, was "Paradise enow" to him, provided that the needed money came regularly either from Ahalyā Bāi or from the tributary States The older ministers of each,—like Jivvā Dādā under Sindhia and Parāshar Dādāji under Holkar,—favoured peace like their masters But a rupture could not be averted when the young and hot-headed Gopāl Bhāu, in the pride of his position as Sindhia's viceroy in the North, over-rode the sober counsels of the patient and diplomatic Jivvā Dādā and adopted a hustling policy towards Holkar's generals in the disputed areas I reject as an enemy fabrication the story in the Holkar family chronicle that it was Gopāl Bhāu's proud ambition to seize Tukoji Holkar and present him in chains as a captive of war before his master But it cannot be denied that Gopāl Bhāu had no patience with Holkar's agents and acted in a downright thrustful manner towards them On Holkar's side the peace party failed only when Gopāl Bhāu's unwise attack on Tukoji at Surauli (8 October, 1792) wrecked their policy and left the field open to the young fire eater Malhar Holkar II

§ 4 *How the open rupture began in 1792*

In September 1792, Sindhia's generals began to seize Holkar's jagirs in the Ganges-Jamuna Doab and the west Mathura district The war-cloud between these two houses after first gathering in the north-eastern horizon for sometime, soon burst at Kāmā (32 miles north of Bharatpur) and quickly moved from that district west and south, through Alwar into Rajputana proper Kāmā was now an imperial crownland and Sindhia as the Delhi Emperor's keeper was entitled to its revenue. But a captain of Holkar's family named Khush-hāl Kumār Pāgyā, thrust himself into the fort with his contingent and would not leave when politely asked by Gopāl Bhāu to do so Tukoji sent him reinforcements when Gopal Bhau's lieutenant Lakhwā

Dāda laid siege to Kāmā After some weeks of fighting, Khush-hal was murdered by a Rajput whose sister he had abducted, and the leaderless garrison cut their way out with their arms and rejoined Holkar's camp

The contest next overflowed into the adjoining Alwar territory, where Tukoji Holkar's nephew Bāpu Rao was out on tribute collection Gopāl Bhāu sent him a message to say, "We have to realise ten lakhs from the Māchert (Alwar) Rajah Please do not press him for your money until we have collected our dues" Then the Sindhian generals marched to the scene in full force, and Bāpu Holkar retired to Lalsot in Jaipur territory in order to avoid a battle

Tukoji Holkar himself was then encamped at Bhagwantgarh, on the south side of the Banās river, 13 miles north-west of Sawāi Mādhopur Here he was visited (on 25 September 1792) by Daulat-rām Haldiā, the Jaipur diwan, who formed with him a plan for a combined attack on Mahadji Sindhia's forces in Rajputana It was settled that Tukoji would move from Bhagwantgarh to Surauli, eleven miles west of it, on the same southern bank of the Banas river (four miles south of Isardā), and begin the war on Sindhia as soon as the Jaipur Rajah got his contingent ready and issued from his capital The Rajah's diwan left for Jaipur, with an agent of Tukoji, in order to hasten the war preparations At this time, one large detachment of Holkar's army was posted at Lālsot under Bāpu Holkar, to shield the Jaipur capital from the Sindhian advance, and it was planned that he would join his uncle as soon as the projected campaign was opened

§ 5 *The Brush at Surauli, 8 Oct 1792*

Sindhia's generals, Gopāl Bhāu and Jivvā Dādā with De Boigne's brigade had been advancing from the north-eastern angle of the Jaipur kingdom, conquering Bālāheri, Manpur, Girgarh and Dāosā On learning of the new plot hatched against their master they at once turned sharply

southwards, by-passed Bāpu Holkar (leaving him on their right), and swiftly moved down towards Tukoji Holkar's camp on the Banās river. That chief had reached Surauli on 3rd October, and his general Bāpu could not join him in time for the coming battle No battle, however, took place; the screen of light horse and Pindhari foragers in Holkar's service, spread before Tukoji's camp and, always shrinking from any action, merely tried to envelop Sindhia's army and interrupt its supplies Parāshar Dādāji, the minister in charge of Tukoji's affairs, very wisely took early precautions as Sindhia's army approached him. he sent away the heavy baggage and camp to the south and even removed Tukoji from the camp, while he himself with a light force stood at Surauli boldly facing the enemy

Here on 8th October 1792, Mahadji Sindhia's generals, after a rapid march of 20 miles from Nawai (in Jaipur State), surprised and beat up Tukoji Holkar's camp after a running skirmish for an hour or two, and captured nine pieces of artillery, 400 mares, 200 loaded camels, Holkar's royal band, kettledrums and flag &c Tukoji retreated from the field all that night and next day and reached Lakheri (35 miles southwards) on the 9th, and without making any halt there sought greater safety by going next day to Kesorāi Patan (30 miles further south) The victorious generals, Gopal Bhau and Jivvā Dādā, followed him up to Rāmpurā (better known as Aligarh-Rampurā, now in the Tonk State), 10 miles south of Surauli, while a light detachment under Jagu Bāpu was pushed further south in pursuit of the Holkar army

This beating up of a half deserted camp, which does not deserve the name of a battle,—became a turning point in the relations between Holkar and Sindhia It utterly humiliated Tukoji in the eyes of the public The family honour of the Holkars was wounded too deeply for Sindhia to be forgiven A mere servant of their hereditary rival had thrashed and driven out the active head of the house of Holkar! The insult could be wiped out only with blood

When the news of it reached Ahalyā Bāi, her anger flamed up; in the picturesque language of the Holkar family chronicle, what was merely the scalding of a finger became an inflammation of the head to her. She promised to spare no money in raising a new army for avenging the insult and declared that she would set out on campaign in person if her officers faltered. Men were recruited at various places and sent in batches to her generals in Rajputana month after month. Tukoji had engaged the French mercenary captain Chevalier Dudrenec to raise trained battalions for him in the manner of De Boigne's brigades in Sindhia's service. But owing to Ahalyā Bāi's parsimony* only four battalions could be formed, each consisting of 400 men (against 510 in a battalion of De Boigne), and from the shortness of the time they were imperfectly drilled. Besides, this force had no artillery at all comparable to De Boigne's splendid light brass guns, copious supply of munitions, and efficient transport organization.

The Indore Government's one need was a pushful General. Bāpu Holkar had been an eye-witness of Patan and Mertā, and therefore knew his own military inferiority and dreaded an open conflict with Sindhia's New Model army; moreover, he was now in broken health. Parāshar Dādāji, the man of business in charge of Holkar's army, fully agreed with Bāpu. Tukoji Holkar was quiescent in his cups, and wished for nothing better than to be left alone with his bottles. Their policy was to make a working compromise with Mahadji Sindhia's generals in Hindustan by mutual agreement and concession. Such an agreement was actually made even after the Surauli affair and it lasted for some four months.

Holkar's power for mischief having been thus neutralised for the time being, and a working compromise effected between the two parties, the Sindhian generals went back northwards to their own work in the Jaipur and Alwar

* A report from Ahalya Bai's Court, 26 July 1793, says that the army cost 3 lakhs a month, and the soldiers were 14 months in arrears of pay

territories But in the April of next year (1793), the hatching of a second anti-Sindhia coalition by Tukoji Holkar and alarming reports of his armed preparations made the Sindhian generals again hurry to the south of the Banās river During the six months that had passed since the brush at Surauli, Ahalyā Bāi had been raising new levies and sending them in successive detachments to Tukoji This chief was now encamped at Jhapāit ghāt, a ferry at a sharp northward re-entrant angle of the Chambal river, 12 miles south of Lākheri city About 14th April he was reported to be collecting forces, "Gosāin, Bairāgi, Rāngré, Rajput, Mīnā, Gujar, and Pathāns from Bhupāl, Kurwāi and Sironj as *sebandi* (militia or irregulars) The Deccani horse raised in Maheshwar (the seat of Ahalyā Bāi) was reaching him" in a continuous stream His lieutenants were also being called in Kāshi Rao (his eldest son) and Bāpu Holkar (the guardian of Kāshi) had already reached his camp, while Malhar Holkar (a younger son) was coming up from Maheshwar *via* Kanad, Agar, Bhansodā, and Mehidpur

§ 6 *Malhar Rao Holkar the Younger Policy of aggression triumphs*

And then came Malhar Rao Holkar the younger, on the scene, and "reversed the treaty with Gopāl Bhāu" This young son of Tukoji was a fanatical believer in the light foray tactics (*ghanimi qāwā*) which had made Shivaji, Baji Rao I and Malhar Holkar I famous throughout India many generations earlier and against enemies very differently armed. Recently this hot-headed youth had run away from home, gone to war on his own account, assembled bands of predatory horsemen and led them in looting helpless villages of the Peshwa's dominions in Khandesh This success had raised his prestige in the ignorant circle of Ahalyā Bāi's advisers, and his own self-conceit to the point of madness He now insisted on being sent to Rajputana with power to override his father's generals, and promised to crush

Mahadji's much-vaunted New Model army by making one sudden charge with his myriads of light cavalry, *à la* Malhar Holkar the First!

Ahalyā Bāi yielded to his boastful tongue and sent him to the Holkar camp in Rajputana, where Malhar II brushed aside the sober counsels of Bāpu and Parāshar and ordered an aggressive policy against the Sindhian generals.

Gopāl Bhāu and Jivvā Dādā took immediate action. Moving south through the Jaipur kingdom, by way of Chātsu and Nawāi, and being joined by De Boigne's choice brigade from Koil during the march, they arrived at Tonk on 24th April, and next day advanced to Kākor, 12 miles to the south-east, seeking the enemy out.

Meantime, from his base at Jhapāit ghāt Tukoji Holkar had pushed one division under Kāshi and Bāpu Holkar, with Parāshar Dādāji as diwan, to Bābi, 10 miles north of Lākheri. And a decisive battle seemed imminent. But again the peace makers intervened and tried to avert a civil war between these Maratha chiefs.

The Peshwā's ministers Nānā Fadnis and Hari Pant Phādké had long been trying to make up the quarrel between Sindhia and Holkar. They had made Mahādji, who was then in Punā, write to his generals in the North not to give any provocation to Holkar for the next two months and a half during which interval the two ministers were hopeful of effecting an amicable settlement between the two chiefs. Mahādji restrained his hand for four months, but no peace could be made as Tukoji persisted in replying "I will fight one battle at least to wipe off the disgrace of the defeat at Sinauli." So the Peshwā's agent gave up the attempt in despair.

On learning of the failure of the peace mission and Tukoji's open declaration in favour of war, Mahadji Sindhia at last wrote to his generals in the beginning of April to accept the challenge, and they accordingly pushed on to Tonk in search of the enemy.

While the rival hosts thus neared each other again, a

last attempt at peace was made. On 12th May Parāshar Dādāji, Tukoji's chief man-of-business, rode into Gopāl Bhāu's camp at Onārā to renew negotiations for a reconciliation. He conducted the Sindhian envoys to Kāshi Holkar and Bāpu Holkar, who after discussion and adjustment of points agreed to their proposal that Parāshar should next visit Tukoji and secure from that chief a ratification of the settlement made by Bāpu and Kāshi.

Parāshar Dādāji reached Tukoji's base about the 17th of May, told him of the settlement made in Bāpu Holkar's presence, and asked him to name a day for confirming this agreement in the presence of Sindhia's generals.

But the fully ripened fruit of peace was destined to rot. For, by this time Malhar Holkar the younger had reached his father's camp. Fired with boundless pride and ambition, he rebuked the aged Tukoji, crying out, "We have been maintaining an army for the last eight months at the cost of lakhs of Rupees in order to recover our lost prestige in Hindustan. You have now discarded the policy of fighting and thereby saving our honour, and made peace with Sindhia. This has destroyed even the little prestige that was still left to us. You remain here with your peace. I will listen to none, but deliver one battle." So saying he next day marched away to the front. Then Tukoji turned a somersault, repudiated the agreement made by Parāshar and censured him. The baffled minister sulked in his tent in grief and humiliation.

§ 7. *De Boigne's advance. First battle at Panchilas.*

Sindhia's generals lost no time in taking up the challenge, leaving Bandria (2 miles south-west of Aligarh-Rampurā) they went to Sawāi Mādhopur on 23rd May, halted there for two or three days to place their camp in safety and lighten their force, and then returned westwards to seek the enemy out (26th). Meantime, Malhar Holkar who had usurped the supreme command of Holkar's fighting

forces, advanced from Bābi to Panchilas village and took post behind a *nala*. His army, some 15 to 20 thousand horse, besides foot, was drawn up in three cavalry divisions under Bāpu Holkar, Parāshar Dādāji, and himself, with the irregular infantry of Nāgās and Bairāgis in front and the camp behind

The Sindhian army advanced from the north-east, marching in De Boigne's favourite column formation, his trained infantry battalions and artillery protected the front and the two flanks, the Deccani horse took shelter in the centre of the column, and a small force of musketeers and some light guns guarded the rear Before such a compact formation, the Holkar cavalry with their Cossack tactics merely hovered round beyond the range of its fire, unable to stop its advance

Early on the 29th of May, De Boigne on sighting the enemy's position deployed his infantry in line of battle and turning a quarter circle struck Holkar's front and opened artillery fire on their stationary masses Bāpu Holkar and Parāshar Dādāji well knew the futility of Malhar's boasted charging tactics and left him alone to try them, while they kept their own divisions safe by not moving up to the attack Malhar Holkar at the head of his own troops (the left wing) made a detour round Sindhia's army and attacked its rear Here instead of finding a confused crowd of servants transport animals and baggage, he was met by a steady line of disciplined musketeers with light guns and *chevaux de frise* before them Malhar's cavalry found it impossible to hurl itself upon its opponents in the one impetuous charge so long dreamt of by him While the attack was thus halted by these obstacles to a cavalry sweep, De Boigne's rear-guard ploughed their enemy's ranks with grape shot and bullet Soon afterwards, Lakhwā Dādā arrived with the Household Cavalry (the *huzurāt*) to aid the defence Malhar's bolt was shot, he fled away with the broken remnant of his troops

Meanwhile in the front line, De Boigne's light guns

had been working havoc among the stationary Holkarians, whose only missile weapons were erratic rockets and some rusty old firelocks While Holkar's army was thus engaged in its front and left, Sindhia's Pindharis made a detour by their own left and encircled and plundered Kashi Rao Holkar's camp in the rear with hardly any opposition These enveloping tactics can succeed only against primitive armies

At the sight of Malhar's wing returning thinned and disordered from their advance, the entire army of Holkar broke and fled away, abandoning their baggage The spoils taken by the victors included 175 horses, 50 camels, 3 *palkis*, 4 camels loaded with treasure, besides quantities of rockets, swivel guns mounted on camels and other arms, and the entire baggage of Kāshi Holkar

The defeated army of Holkar fell hurriedly back and by continuous retreat reached its base camp near the town of Lākheri, about 18 miles to the south Gopāl Bhāu spent the night after the victory in the enemy's abandoned camp near Panchilas and then followed them up to Bābi (30th May) and Balwān (31st),—the last named place being six miles north-east of Lākheri

§8 *Topography of the Theatre of War at Lākheri*

This village of Balwān lies three miles south-east of the Indaigarh Railway Station, Lākheri is situated six miles south-west of Balwān, under shelter of the long range of hills running north-eastwards from Kotā to Indargarh As the modern traveller hurries by the Nāgdā-Muttrā Railway line from Sawāi Mādhopur towards Kotā, a gap in the line of hills on his right four miles south of the Indaigarh station gives him a glimpse of the new city of Lākheri lying under a dark cloud of smoke from the many chimneys of its modern cement factory A mile west of the factory area the old city of Lākheri nestles under the western hill range In between the two cities, old and new,

but a little to the north of them lies the lake of Lākheri, in a fork of the hills whose lower end has been dammed up with a wall South of these towns, the country is level down to the Chambal and this side has been utilised by the branch railway line running to the cement factory Through the gap east of Lākheri runs the modern road from that city to Indargarh in the north

This gap, about three furlongs in width is surrounded by a jungle tract, which begins some three miles from Balwān on the east and stretches up to the outskirts of Lākheri on the west It is a broken ravine-scored area, covered with scrub jungle and thickets, composed mostly of *babul*, *nim*, dwarf tamarind and *ber* The hill on the north or right hand of the pass was densely wooded up to its top

On the 1st of June, De Boigne started from the halting place of Balwān, after sending a message to his chief Gopal Bhau, saying, "The path leading to the pass of Lākheri is just wide enough for one cart, and the thick forest is unfavourable to cavalry movements I am going alone with five battalions to cut down the jungle" They agreed to the plan of clearing a path through the forest that day, and advancing with the full force to fight a pitched battle the next day Therefore, after detaching De Boigne with his pioneers the Maratha army rested in its camping ground at Balwān

After easily passing over three miles of open ground from Balwān, De Boigne placed his five battalions on guard and set the pioneers to work As they advanced making a road and arrived near the mouth of the pass they were suddenly assailed by a heavy fire of rockets and guns The General climbed a tree to reconnoitre There lay before him the entire army of Holkar spread out on the plain behind a marsh The mouth of the pass was entrenched and held by a crowd of irregular infantry consisting of wild Gosāins and Bairāgis, or married monks fighting for hire, on their left stood Chevalier Dudrenec's line of the four

battalions of trained infantry he had raised for Tukoji Holkar The second line of the enemy was formed by the Deccani horse, in three large divisions (5,000 to 7,000 each) which were led by Bāpu Holkar (right, with Kāshi Rao's contingent), Parāshar Dādāji (centre, with Tukoji's own contingent), and Malhar Holkar (left) These were formed in the open ground some distance behind the pass The rear was made up of Holkar's Pindhari horde (about eight to ten thousand strong) who were mere looters mounted on small ponies Still further in the rear, close to the city lay the tents and baggage of this army

Dudrenec is said to have had only five guns of his own, against 80 under De Boigne, and the disparity in trained infantry was nearly fourfold, 1,600 men against 6,000 There were some old and very ineffective cannon with Holkar's troops The Gosāins and Bairāgis had some antiquated matchlocks, besides swords and spears But their favourite weapon of offence was rockets, of which they had an ample supply carried in carts to the firing line, these could do no harm at all comparable to artillery fire, but they were chiefly useful in making unbroken horses stampede, and also in causing fires in the enemy's munitions by a rare lucky hit

Gopāl Bhāu's command included 20,000 cavalry of his own and De Boigne's First Brigade, consisting of ten battalions (541 bayonets each), with 500 Ruhela infantry and a regiment of select cavalry (300 sabres) attached to it He had 80 excellent light guns of improved French design, which fired smaller balls, but with the same range as his enemy's heavier pieces But his transport and supply system was a wonder for that age Each light gun was drawn by 8 oxen and its separate munition-waggon by 12 oxen Each battalion had attached to it five guns,—two of them three-pounders, two six-pounders, and one a caronade (8-pounder or larger). For each three-pounder gun 400 rounds, for each six-pounder 300 rounds, and for the caronade 45 rounds of grape and 12 shells, were carried into

the field To a regiment of cavalry were attached four three-pounder galloper guns, each drawn by two horses, with four camels each carrying 60 rounds for each galloper. Camels also transported water to the troops

§ 9 *The Battle of Lākheri*

Immediately after completing his reconnaissance with the help of a telescope, De Boigne decided to deliver his attack without waiting for the next day Sending urgent messages to the camp to call up the rest of his battalions and artillery and to inform Gopāl Bhāu of this unexpected change of plan and to request the support of the Deccani cavalry, he formed his troops in line of battle The country leading from Balwān to the Lākheri pass, after the first three miles is intersected by ravines and dry brooks and encumbered with jungle Therefore, De Boigne had to deploy his full strength gradually as his battalions and guns came up in succession

He began the battle with the small force he had at first at hand, by sending forward three of his battalions and a body of Ruhela irregular infantry under Abdāl Khan, which was specially trained for storming hills, to carry the pass that led to the enemy's position No adequate artillery support could be given to the attack for some time, and this small advance-guard [1] was assailed by a storm of cannon-balls and rocket-fire from the defence trenches on the heights and thrown back with heavy loss De Boigne then wisely led his men back to the shelter of the trees on the two sides, where the enemy's big "guns of position" could do them little harm. But Holkar's army by the prodigal and useless expenditure of its scanty supply of powder and shot at this initial stage, ran quite out of munitions when the real crisis of the battle came later and it could then make no reply to De Boigne's massed artillery

The enforced halt among the woods enabled the rest of De Boigne's infantry and guns to come up He deployed his column and formed his line of battle, unlimbered his

guns, and opened fire upon the enemy with a crushing superiority.* Meantime the sound of the enemy's opening artillery had carried the news of the action to the Maratha generals in the camp before De Boigne's couriers, and Gopāl Bhāu had sent Lakhwā Dādā up with Sindhia's Household cavalry (*Pāgā*) to reinforce the vanguard. The infantry battalions were thus heartened by the sight of strong cavalry support behind them on the left, which guarded them against any attack from the rear.

Thus clearing the pass, De Boigne issued from it into the more open ground beyond, which was however too much cut up by ravines and covered with trees and jungle to allow regular manœuvring or free-firing. But just then an unforeseen accident threatened disaster to his force. "A bullet hitting the iron side of an open munition waggon caused a spark to flash, which exploded that waggon and the fire spreading, twelve other tumbrils blew up at the same time, while ten or twelve guns were thrown out of their carriages and rendered unserviceable. The confusion spread to the infantry, and the enemy horse, advanced with rapidity to profit by the disorder. De Boigne, who saw the storm coming, immediately retired his men some yards into the forest," and kept them standing ready to meet the attack. As the Holkarian cavalry came out of their back line into the open plain before them, they were subjected to a withering fire of 6,000 muskets firing by platoons and 80 guns ranged close ahead in a semi-circle, and fell into disorder after losing many men and horses for nothing.

Just as the enemy horse stopped and hesitated, De Boigne launched his select cavalry on them. This body of only three hundred troopers, mounted on superb horses and accoutred in the sumptuous style of the famous Bengal Cavalry of the British East India Company's army, charged with the compactness and force of a bullet. Their green

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* Holkar's guns were of heavier calibre, but De Boigne's were double in number and equal in range, and could be fired with greater quickness and accuracy by his European gunlayers.

coats and red turbans were at first lost to view in the wavy ocean of ten thousand parti-coloured jackets and tight twisted orange pugrees of the Deccani horse The blow was struck at the psychological moment At the impact of disciplined valour, Holkar's rabble on horseback began to scatter like chaff before the wind Emboldened by this sight, the entire Sindhian cavalry, under Jivā Dādā and Gopāl Bhāu, fell upon the shaken Holkarians and turned their retreat into a hopeless rout, chasing them out of sight from the battle-field.

By this time it was well past noon Holkar's troops who had been up and in arms since day-break and working for eight hours under the burning sun of June in Rajputana, were at last overcome by thirst Worn out with toil, raked by De Boigne's guns to which they were no longer able to reply, and dying of thirst with no hope of water supply, the Holkarian army now broke up rapidly As their Rajah's family chronicler admits, "Our troops began to cry out for water In Sindhia's campoo camels continued to bring skins full of water, but on our side there was no water. Therefore, the Gosāins and Bairāgis ran away Munitions ran short in our five [four] battalions . Even the Maratha horse took to flight"

Where was Malhar Holkar II at this time? As his father's cavalry left the lost field and issued out of the pass, they found Malhar lying in the water of a tank by the roadside quite senseless The pot-valiant hero was cooling his wine-flushed head after ruining his family prestige and the lives of hundreds of brave men As the *Holkar Kaifiyat* comments on it "He in reliance on whom they had made the reversal of the treaty, was in such a condition!"

With the flight of the Gosāins and Bairāgis and of the Pindharis and Marātha horse behind them,* the entire

* One MS of *Holkaranchi Kaifiyat* gives the reading that Bāpu Holkar signalled with his scarf to Dudrenec to retire, and then the army broke up The other MSS omit this version, but it is quite credible, Bāpu as a cool-headed and experienced General must have

Centre and Right wing of Holkar's army disappeared The Deccanis vanished like smoke, leaving the fight to be continued by the Hindustanis on both sides Holkar's left wing still stood firmly It was now a duel between two trained infantry forces, each under European leadership

De Boigne called upon Chevalier Dudrenec to surrender, but the call was gallantly refused and a fight to the finish ensued Dudrenec, by a prompt tactical move pivoting on his right and marching *en echelon,* had extended his line from the left, into the gap created by the vanishing of Holkar's centre, and though absolutely denuded of cavalry support, he tried to guard his flanks with fire But his numbers were hopelessly weak, 1,600 bayonets against 6,000 and his guns had been rendered useless by the exhaustion of powder, and there was no reserve or support within sight Left utterly alone in the field, and hemmed in front by De Boigne's ten battalions and on the two flanks and rear by Gopāl Bhāu's returned cavalry. with sixty light brass guns firing on them at point-blank range, Holkar's northern sepoys fought on till they were almost all annihilated There was no escape possible, and none was sought All their European officers were either killed or wounded, Dudrenec himself escaped death by falling into a heap of the slain

Holkar's defeat was complete and the battle decided the Sindhia-Holkar rivalry for domination over Hindustan

The loss on Holkar's side was very heavy Dudrenec, in an interview with Ahalyā Bāi on 27th August, reported that 800 to 900 men had fallen on his side, this evidently refers to his four battalions, which would mean more than 50 per cent fatal casualties The deaths among the Maratha horse have not been estimated anywhere, and we are only told, in the accounts that reached Punā, of "great destruction" having been wrought among them But they took to flight so quickly that more of them died of thirst and fatigue

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found out that the day was lost and he rightly tried to save his army for fighting another day

on the way than those that fell on the field, chiefly as victims of De Boigne's fire. Sindhia's loss was even slighter than at Mertā. The fugitives suffered unspeakable hardship from lack of water on the route for some days after leaving Lākheri. (*MD* ii 241. Gulgulé D. *Holkar Kaif* 64.)

From the hard-won field, Gopāl Bhāu marched and occupied Holkar's abandoned camp near Lākheri city. The spoils of victory included 38 pieces of cannon, ten cart-loads of rockets, 200 horses, 50 camels, three *palkis*, four camels laden with treasure, besides all the tents and baggage. (Kalā *Akh.*)

APPENDIX C

Origin of the Holkar Myth

In the battle of Patan, De Boigne's brigade, after carrying the line of enemy guns in the centre by storm and putting the Rajput army in that sector to the rout, did not halt to secure the guns, but swept on to crush the enemy wings on their right and left, and after the victory had been completed returned to their camp at night. Holkar's cavalry, which had done nothing in their sector, came upon the guns after the brigade had left, and finding them unguarded, claimed them with shouts of ignorant exultation as the spoil of their own arms. Next day, when they tried to drag these guns away to their own camp, De Boigne's sepoys sent to them to say that if they did not wish to be thrashed they must not touch the guns which the brigade had really won. Holkar's men gave up the guns in anger and humiliation. This was their first grievance, an example of Sindhia's failure to divide the gains of war in exactly equal proportion with Holkar.

Sulking over this discomfiture, Holkar's contingent (working hand in glove with Ali Bahādur's one thousand to 1200 horsemen), in the next battle, at Mertā, did not unite with Sindhiā's force, but stood in angry isolation one mile in the rear of Mahādji's cavalry and therefore fully two

miles behind De Boigne's battle-front. In the first stage of that battle when his right wing was separated from the rest of the brigade owing to Captain Rohan's tactical blunder in advancing too far alone, and that wing was scattered by a Rajput charge, the news quickly reached the Holkar cavalry that the campoo had been broken, they could even see the fleeing sepoys and the pursuing Rajputs straight in their distant front.

Immediately after this stroke, the whole body of the Rāthor cavalry by a tumultuous charge encircled the brigade on all sides, and then advancing against Sindhiā's horse behind the trained infantry, drove them back for miles. Thus what Bāpu Holkar saw from his position in the extreme right rear was a cloud of enemy cavalry which completely hid De Boigne's *campoo* from his eyes, and myriads of flying Maratha horsemen. He could not possibly notice that De Boigne had already formed his infantry into a square and was shooting down the Rajput cavalry swarming round him. Hence, Bāpu Holkar naturally concluded that Sindhiā's entire army had been broken and the day already lost.

But by this time the ranks of the charging Rāthors had been woefully thinned by De Boigne's rapid grape-shot and their horses were blown by their gallop for six miles from their own lines. So, when Bāpu Holkar faced them with his fresh horsemen the Rajputs after a little sword-play were checked and forced to retreat. To this extent it is true that the Rajput advance was first halted and turned back by the bold stand of the Holkar horse, and if the victors had been Greeks they would have set up their *trophy* or pillar of victory in front of the Holkar contingent's position.

But this theory does not take into note the fact that Holkar's squadrons had no artillery, which Sindhiā's force alone possessed and which drained away the life blood of the Rāthor assailants, and secondly that the final and desperate attack of 3,000 saffron-robed Rāthors, vowed to

victory or death, was annihilated by De Boigne alone, *without* the help of a single sabre from Holkar's side.

From what Bāpu Holkar saw from his position in the first stage of the fighting, arose the myth that the battle of Mertā had been won *entirely* by the Holkar cavalry after De Boigne had lost the day. This story, as developed in open camp-fire gossip, found its most fantastic form in the Holkar Family Chronicle written 26 years after the event, which runs thus:—

"The Rathor horse charged, cut the chains of Sindhia's line of guns, attacked the gunners with their swords and fell upon the guns. The line of infantry fled away without uttering one word. Gopal Rao and Jivā Dādā turned back for six miles. Then De Boigne in terror came to Kashi Rao and Bapu Holkar, who were standing erect in the field, dashed his hat (down to the ground) and entreated, "Don't let disgrace and loss fall upon me. You are Sardārs, do what is proper." Then Bāpu attacked with his 1000 horsemen and in hand to hand fighting killed all the four hundred Rāthors who engaged them." (*Hol. Kaifiyat*, p. 56.)

After the battle of Patan, the Holkar contingent had angrily separated itself from Sindhia's army, at not getting an exactly equal share of the guns captured there. This complaint of injustice by their "ally" (*Sohbyā* in their Maratha despatches) was repeated after the battle of Mertā. And consistently with this spirit, Holkar's general Dudrenec withdrew from Sindhia's army after the battle of Mālpurā (1800) as a protest at half the captured cannon not being given to him, though in this battle his corps had contributed nothing to the victory but owed their life to the Sindhian campoo's prompt reinforcement of them.

APPENDIX D

Tukoji Holkar's defence of his attitude.

(Instructions to Yeshwant Gangādhar, his agent in Punā, 23rd January 1793.)

Sindhia has been telling the Peshwā :—"I am a sardār equal in rank with Holkar. By my own exertions I have reconquered territories [in Hindustan] and out of them given Holkar his fair share, and also additional lands worth five lakhs a year in order to satisfy him. And yet our master does not consider it necessary to allot a task to him [in our master's business.] Holkar does not keep even the quota of troops proportionate to his fief. His total unspent balance [of income from his fief] amounts to ten lakhs a year. Speak to him on this point and send him to campaign in Patiālā or Kathiāwād-Kach-Bhuj. If he cannot undertake this task, recall him and keep him in the Desh country. He has done harm to my military undertakings at several places by his hostile intrigue. I can prove it against him. Let our master judge the matter and decide who is to blame, he or I."

On receiving this complaint, the two Punā ministers have summoned me to their court. You should give them my reply in the following terms :—

"It is not true that Mahādji Sindhiā alone has done our master's work, while I have sat down at home, rendering no service but consuming my pay in idleness.

For twelve years [1776-1788] I remained in attendance [on the Punā darbār] and performed every task assigned to me . . . Consider the fact that as Sindhia served in North India, so I too when stationed in the south, fought Goddard who had come to invade us, and thanks to our master's power, I was victorious and "made Goddard see the sea-coast," [*i e.*, Goddard's Bor-ghat expedition was defeated.] Then came the Karnatak campaign in which I maintained our master's supremacy. More recently, after my coming

to North India, when the battles with Ismail Beg [at Patan,] and with the Rathors at Mertā took place, it is known to the world who did the real work, Sindhia or I. It is not true that Sindhia alone has rendered conspicuous service to the State while I have done nothing. By our master's order I had to remain in the Deccan for twelve years, which enabled Sindhia to win the heritage of Hindustan and talk big. I remained there in obedience to orders ... and is this the return of my loyalty?

If the Peshwā desires that all the lands gained in Hindustan should be administered directly by himself, I agree to it. The lands which may be gained in future should also be similarly administered and not divided between the two of us.

Sindhia is demanding payment of the sums advanced by him for the work of our Government ... Let our master consider how Sindhia alone has gained all the vast sums from the property of the Delhi Emperor, Afrāsiyāb Khan, and Ghulām Qādir, and the loot from Ismail Beg and [from the Rajputs] after the Patan and Mertā battles, besides many miscellaneous sums in ransom and revenue collection from smaller places. If our master takes these facts into account, Sindhia's claim to be a creditor to our Government will be seen to have no basis in fact.

If you do not agree to send me out on [North Indian] campaigning on the terms I have stated above, then recall me to the Deccan and keep me there.

The Peshwa knows well who has created mischief [by disturbing the political arrangement dictated from Puna.] Sindhia has no authority over Jaipur, and yet he has sent his troops and everywhere disturbed [my administration] and now denounces me to the Peshwā as the mischief-maker. It is surprising that the Peshwa and his ministers listen to such talk (without protesting.)

I am determined not to relinquish my heritage of Hindustan as long as I live. In the same way, Sindhia is determined not to let Holkar stay in Hindustan in order that he

alone might hold that country The Punā authorities ought to give their own decision in this dispute and confirm to each party its legitimate share At present our Government merely repeats to me the words of Sindhia. The discussion in Punā is purely one-sided This is very nice indeed! I have so long held my soul in patience, wishing to obey our master's command and to resolve this dispute without resort to internecine war But in Punā things remain as on the first day" (*Hingné Daf* ii No 93)

CHAPTER XII

EUROPEAN MILITARY ADVENTURERS IN INDIA

§ 1. *Guerilla Warfare of the Marathas—its defects*

The old Maratha method of fighting is usually called guerilla warfare, but it was quite different from the tactics followed by the Spanish *guerilleros* against Napoleon's troops in the famous Peninsular War. Indeed, the Maratha fighters are best described by their Persian title of "predatory light horse" (*ghanimi fauj*). Their chief characteristics were that they moved in large bodies—"myriads of horse" as Munro wrote to Wellington—and they could cover long distances very quickly, being unencumbered with artillery, baggage, munitions and even food supplies, as they and their ponies lived on the country. But unlike the Spanish guerillas they had no muskets and could effect no ambuscade by small parties, such as terrorised the French armies in Spain. When forced into a battle in the open, their plan was to ride down the enemy by a tumultuous charge enveloping him from all sides at once. Hence it followed that against artillery and walled posts held by trained musketeers, the Deccani light cavalry was powerless. No doubt they did incalculable economic damage and in a single week's raid could destroy like a locust swarm the crops and trees and industrial plant of a whole district. It took a generation to fully repair the ravages of a single raid of the Marathas and to restore production to its former condition.

The guerilla system of the Deccan had an inherent defect, and this became evident in the second half of the 18th century. Guerillas can operate best when they fight in an area where the people are friendly to them, and supply them with food and intelligence, thus enabling them to move in complete concealment from their enemy. But

where such irregular horse is operating outside its homeland, it antagonises the local population by sucking the substance of the country, and this handicap lessens the secrecy and speed of its movements. Moreover, the predatory horse can only cut off small provision supplies and stragglers, but cannot drive away a regular army from the field or from a defensible post, if the latter has stored provisions in advance.

Then, in the late 18th century, the European-led armies in India had an increased proportion of muskets to pikes in each battalion, and improved the number, mobility, and fire-rate of their light guns. The Maratha light cavalry felt itself more and more helpless in confronting such enemies; in fact the Marathas could operate successfully against the new model if the latter was on the march with cumbersome guns and baggage—as was the case with Cockburn at Talégaon and Goddard in the Borghat, where the Marathas were defending their own broken country. Here the superior arms and discipline of the European-led troops were neutralised by the failure of their supplies and the exhaustion of their munitions. But so long as the ammunition lasted, the predatory light horse durst not approach them.

As was to be expected, the Maratha light horse refused to face the campoo[1] unless it was given fire-protection of its own. In the Lakheri campaign (1793) before the final battle was joined, Holkar's men avoided battle and only tried to "go round the battalions" of De Boigne by carefully keeping out of the range of their enemy's guns. The impotence of horsemen against musketeers was proved on the field of Panchilas, which preceded the battle of Lakheri by three days and determined beforehand the result of the latter battle. At Panchilas, the wild Malhar Rao Holkar II with

[1] For the sake of convenience I use the word *campoo* for these European-trained brigades and the word *fauj* for the old type of Indian troops, mostly cavalry. Words like *campoo, paltan,* (battalion), *kamedan* (Fr. commandant), *manjar* (major), *jarnal* (General) have come from the French and become naturalised in our indigenous histories and despatches, written in Persian and Marathi.

his indigenous cavalry made a detour round one flank and threatened the rear of De Boigne's army; but being confronted by steady musketeers and quick-firing light guns on that face, he broke and fled away; and then the rest of Holkar's army, which had been waiting to profit by the success of this cavalry charge, left the field without striking one blow! [*Holk. Kaifiyat* 62-63, "*gheraghen*".]

When the fighting was not a skirmish but a grand field action or when the fate of a long campaign is considered, the worst defect of the indigenous type of Indian armies was found to be not its lack of superior fire-arms but the utter absence of integration among its various parts and the want of a brains trust among its leaders. As the French soldier-politician the Comte de Modave observed in 1776: "The army of an Indian prince does not form a regular whole as among us. The different bodies which compose *them have no connection* with one another. No staff officer, particular or general, is seen among them. Nor is there any subordination of the chiefs to the supreme chief of the army, or any connection or dependence of one to the other. Every individual body of soldiers provides itself as it can and as it pleases with provisions and munitions." (*Journal du Voyage*, tr. by me in *Islamic Culture*, July 1937.)

§ 2. *The European military system—why it ultimately failed under the Indian princes.*

The superiority of the campoo over the indigenous troops in the actual clash of arms is obvious; but the new system had serious defects, which ultimately led to its failure in India. Many of these defects were noted by contemporary observers like Thomas Munro and Arthur Wellesley. The root of the matter has been thus briefly put by Sir Alfred Lyall in his *Rise of the British Dominion in India*: "The armament and tactics of civilized nations imply high proficiency in the art of war, abundant supply of costly material, and a strong reserve of well-trained officers; they cannot be hurriedly adopted by an Indian chief whose people are

totally unaccustomed to such inventions Moreover, in proportion as the Marathas adopted the armament and tactics of European warfare, they lost the advantage that comes out of unanimity of national, religious, or tribal sentiment. The new system required professional soldiers, who must be enlisted wherever they could be found, and especially it needed foreign officers" (2nd ed p 198)

The rock on which the campoo system broke hopelessly, was its cost Its soldiers, whether musketeers or gunners, could be made efficient only after a long period of training in cantonments, and their skill and discipline could be kept unimpaired only by means of frequent exercises ever after The Maratha horse, on the other hand, did not need any such elaborate education, their skill in arms and horsemanship often came from village exercises like school games or hunting and therefore did not interfere with their family profession of tillage

Next, fire-arms and munitions are a heavy and recurring charge, a costly transport and supply service has to be maintained for regular troops, who cannot live on the country, as dispersal for foraging would destroy the cohesion and prompt obedience which form the essence of campoo tactics in war Hence, the campoo had to be paid much higher salaries and paid much more punctually than the light horse, who were always, kept in arrears of pay, sometimes for as long as three years, even by Mahādji Sindhia

The infantry of the campoo were almost exclusively men of Oudh, Rohilkhand, and the Doab, and the artillerymen were Upper Indian Muslims and Buxari Hindus, with a large proportion of Telegus and Goanese Christians Thus, being foreigners in Rajputana and the Maratha dominions, they had to be attracted by a higher pay than the local *fauj*, they could not eke out their pay by plundering as the light cavalry did The favour shown to them in the form of higher salaries and more regular payment, produced the bitterest jealousy in the hearts of the *fauj*, which the campoo repaid with contempt for the *fauj* as a mere rabble of armed rustics

We find evidence of this friction as early as the Maratha campaign of Panipat in 1760-61.

The introduction of the campoo broke the homogeneity of the armies of the Indian princes who employed them. This foreign and favoured class stood proudly aloof from the local troops, and the latter retorted by throwing the brunt of the fighting on this corps and standing idly in the rear till all was over except the plundering of a defeated enemy. Hence, in its hour of need the campoo never got the least help from the *fauj*. This was glaringly illustrated at Assaye and many other battles. The campoo knew that it must win or perish alone without the least hope of support from its comrades of the old type under the same flag.

Worst of all, the employment of the campoo side by side with them took the heart out of the indigenous Indian soldiers. A hundred clashes between the two systems since the 4th of September 1676 when François Martin had stormed the fort of Valdaour with only 12 Frenchmen and 60 locally levied sepoys against tenfold odds, had convinced our indigenous type of soldier that it was suicide for him to advance against a campoo unless he was given equal fire-support on his own side. The lesson was burnt into the memory of the Peshwā's generals as they watched the devastating effect of Tipu Sultān's French-worked artillery in the campaign of 1786. At Mertā (10 Sept. 1790) De Boigne gave the classic example of the superiority of science over muscles.*

The inferiority complex thus bred in our old style of soldiers made them useless for retrieving the day when it began to go against them, in a well-contested field. As soon as the trained infantry and gunners on their side were shaken or turned back, the cry ran through the mass of indigenous cavalry in the wings and the rear, that the campoo was broken (*paltan bar bād zhālā, campoo budilā*), and it became impossible to rally the rest of the army. The

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* Valdaour (*Mémoires de F. Martin*, ii. 57). Tipu (Khare, *Lekh Sangrah*, viii. 3930, 3942).

British Indian army broke up hopelessly when the cry arose in the sepoy ranks, "The whites are fleeing" (*gorā bhāgā hai.*)

An incurable cause of weakness in the campoo was its officer class They were all foreigners, as the ignorant fighting castes of India could produce no leader capable of learning the European system of war These foreign officers were not the regular servants of any European State, who would have been men chosen for intelligence and character and bound by a sense of responsibility to their Home Government (like the 200 officers sent out by Napoleon in Decaen's ships in 1803) They were most of them typical mercenaries, deserters, sweepings of their country's armies, and the dregs of their society These adventurers held the European soldier's belief that East of Suez the Ten Commandments did not exist Their dissipated habits and unruly character made them a terror to the country where they operated and an ever-present anxiety to the General who hired them

The campoo was reliable and loyal only under an ever-vigilant, strong, but sympathetic leader and liberal paymaster like De Boigne All the other campoos had the usual vices of the condottieri of mediaeval Italy The extraordinary efficiency of De Boigne's brigades was due to certain causes peculiar to it. Their organizer and head was a man of superior education, varied experience, and lofty character, he kept his men and officers joined together and submissive to discipline because he paid them high salaries without default, as he had secured an assured and regular income adequate for his needs from a territorial grant which he administered personally, he chose as far as possible pure-

* "The General (De Boigne) told me that his chief difficulty now was in managing his European officers, in giving them authority enough to be useful, but not enough to be dangerous, in conciliating their attachment while keeping them at a proper distance, in establishing due limits to their intrigues, and in disconcerting without exposing their ambition" 11 Dec 1794, Thomas Twining, *Travels in India* p 283) Faqir Khairuddin alleges a conspiracy by his Major, an Englishman named Hunter or Taylor, to murder De Boigne (*Ibratnāmah*, iii 245)

hired European officers and gun-layers, in preference to the mestizos and black Christians of Goa who commanded other campoos; he was popular with the English, because being a Savoyard he did not share Perron's French antipathy to the English, and thus he received help from his many friends in the British Indian services and modelled his corps in equipment and arms on the East India Company's Bengal army; he had his own arsenal and gun-factory under European supervision.

§ 3. *Proved inferiority of our indigenous military system and warrior classes illustrated.*

In the 17th century, the guerilla tactics of the Maratha light horse had stopped the advance of the heavy Mughal cavalry, encumbered with clumsy artillery and unwieldy camps. But their descendants at the end of the next century could make no stand against De Boigne's brigades marching in a compact hollow column with musketeers guarding the four faces and portable guns firing grape-shot at each corner. Similarly, none could stop Lord Lake, when he marched in a column of three hundred thousand men, of whom only one-tenth were combatants, because of the vigilant fire-protection on each flank. Such modern armies could be rendered immobile only by the fear of starvation; but stores accumulated in fortified posts on the way and well-escorted food convoys, averted that risk. And the predatory horse of the Deccan was itself liable to night attacks by picked detachments from the European campoo with devastating effect. Thus, Bussy ignominiously routed the Peshwā Bālāji Bājī Rao by a surprise night attack during a lunar eclipse (21 Nov. 1751). Lake surprised and narrowly missed capturing the famous Jaswant Rao Holkar himself at Farrukhābād (on 17th Nov., 1804). Even the unfortunate Col. Monson had dealt one such smashing blow on his pursuer Jaswant Rao Holkar in the night of 21 July 1804 which thoroughly frightened the Holkar army for many days after. [Mohan S. f. 136.]

So much for the vaunted efficacy of the indigenous Marathi system of warfare (*ghanimi qāwā* or light foray tactics)) against firearms and discipline under European leadership The fact is that the Maratha army was palpably inferior to the British Indian army and even to De Boigne's campoo, not only in armament but also in the character of its leaders and men The Maratha officers lacked education, methodical habits, and the power of planning ahead and carrying their plans to completion by the concerted action of a number of able, obedient and punctual subordinates, while their men had no discipline, no orderliness, and no wish to improve themselves Compare a Maratha military officer with his opposite number in the East India Company's army, consider the early Indian career of Major David Price, a run-away Brecknockshire boy who came to India as a private, or the life of a common soldier like John Shipp, or even a civilian like Thomas Twining who entered his Indian service at the age of seventeen, and say if you can supply their match from the high-born Maratha ruling class And the common soldiers of Maharashtra in spite of their personal bravery and lightness of movement, were no match for the steady disciplined sons of Oudh who formed the campoo infantry, the long spear and short sword of the Deccanis were no protection from the excellent muskets made for the campoo under European supervision Even the muskets of the Maratha army were usually second-hand arms sold by the European Powers in India as useless and out of date, and their gunpowder had to be purchased from these enemies

§ 1 *Pre-requisites of the successful working of the European military system wanting in India*

Military discipline as cultivated in ancient Macedonia and Rome or in modern Europe, requires certain qualities of character and nerve which the races forming the Maratha light horse or the Rajput tribal levies, utterly lack Even

[illegible] of weapons could not have made these men the equals in fighting efficiency of the Oudh sepoys of the East India Company's army or of the Sikh soldiers who have upheld [illegible]'s banner beyond the Indian frontier and across the [illegible] Oudh men formed the bulk of Sindhia's campos with a small force of Ruhela cavalry for De Boigne's personal guard.

This intellectual and temperamental defect of the pure Indian military classes threw the artillery branch of the [illegible] from the days of the Mughal empire onwards, [illegible] and French half-castes with hardly [illegible] any position of command or respon[illegible] that of gun-layers. The Indian element in [illegible] in the 18th century were *golandazes*, *i.e.*, mere [illegible] coolies, and occasionally third class gunners for [illegible].

The true superiority of the European armies lay in the [illegible] of the intellect and development of character, and not primarily in their more efficient weapons. These two qualifications were utterly wanting in our indigenous armies; most of our old style officers were illiterate and proud of their ignorance; even the few who could read, never improved themselves by studying new books as the European soldiers and civilians in India very often did. After all, there is no escape from the truth, emphasised in Elizabethan England that *Knowledge is Power*.

Hence neither the best arms of European manufacture nor the most colourful European military costume could convert the purely Indian armies into the equals of European troops or of Indian soldiers long trained and led in action by European officers,—while our national education was defective and methodical life unknown in our society.

The campoo system by putting a foreign head on a purely Indian body, ultimately rendered our armies of the new type helpless and dead when the foreign heads walked off to Europe, abandoning their men as soon as their heap of pagodas had grown sufficiently big to enable them to live

at Home as "Nabobs". This sad truth was learnt by the men of Perron and Avitabile alike

The new system was a valuable military growth no doubt, but it was an exotic and could not take root in the Indian soil, so long as the Indians did not heartily accept and universally spread western knowledge and the western spirit From this fact follows the further need of modern India adopting western industrial methods and producing on the soil modernised officers and modern munitions, so as to possess within her own bosom an inexhaustible reserve of all that a New Model Army requires

§ 5 *Colossal fortunes made by European mercenaries in India*

René Madec, an illiterate Breton sailor, blossomed forth into a partisan captain in India, and even after many defeats and losses here he carried back with himself to France enough wealth to buy a patent of nobility from the French king and some landed estates (*seigneuries*) and to build a castle for his exalted residence He came to be known as the Nawab (E Barbé, *Le Nabab René Madec* 278)

Pierre Cuillier, better known as Perron, was the son of a weaver of Sarthe (S France) and could write a few lines with difficulty Starting his career in the Indian princes' service as a common gunner, he spent the first nine years as a rolling stone, and was next taken by De Boigne into Sindhia's service as the Captain of a battalion (1790) Here he rose to the command of a brigade in 1796, and the headship of Sindhia's campoo in 1801, retiring in September 1803 The fortune that he could pile up in these thirteen years amounted to 135 lakhs of Rupees * But only one-fourth of this (about

* Martin, *Wellesley Despatches*, iii xxxi n On his return to France he reported to the French Government that he had saved 50 million francs (which would be exactly 135 lakhs of Rupees, if we take the pound sterling as equal to 30 francs The pound then exchanged for Rs 8) Martineau, *Le Général Perron* Herbert Compton, *A Particular Account of European Military Adventurers in India*

34 lakhs of Rupees) he could carry away to France, having had to give up the remainder to the English to ensure his safe retreat from India. Eight lakhs of Rupees he carried with himself in cash, jewels and indigo for sale, and the remaining 26 lakhs he recovered from the English bankers of Calcutta, with whom he had prudently deposited the amount while still in Sindhia's service. His fortune at his death (in 1834) was valued at 15 millions of francs or 40 lakhs of Rupees.

Louis Bourquien, another partisan leader in Sindhia's service, retired to France at the same time as Perron (1804) and was reported to have carried away 'an immense fortune' comparable to Perron's.

De Boigne, in a shorter career of seven years (1789-1795), amassed 32 lakhs of Rupees (£400,000). As he used to say, "there was no reason why any European leader of mercenaries in India should not save eight lakhs of Rupees if he were not an idiot or a drunken sot." (Compton 92, 68.)

§ 6. *The Failure of the Maratha princes to raise revenue from their dominions explained.*

We may naturally ask how European generals in the Maratha service could pay their campoos regularly and yet build up such vast fortunes, even when they did not enjoy political supremacy like the English in Bengal. Our wonder is heightened by the fact that the Maratha princes when holding exactly the same territories, used to keep their soldiers in arrears for years together and also run into heavy debt to the bankers. The historical records of the time make the reason for it quite clear.

The Maratha Government in Hindustan had no competent civil service, no stable administration, and no wise foreign policy. De Boigne and Perron by constant tours in their *jāgirs*, put down lawless bands wherever they raised their heads, and thus they gave their lands the necessary peace and security for producing crops and paying revenue. That revenue was collected by a band of Indian civil

officers, whose work was daily checked by their French masters, and thus slackness and peculation in the subordinates could be at once detected and punished A British revenue officer noticed, "The Doab parganas having been under the management of General Perron and the others (*viz.* those on the right bank of the Jamunā) under that of Col Hessing, the administration of both which officers was much superior to that of the native Governments" (Atkinson, *N W P Gazetteer*, VII 520)

The Sindhia and Holkar chiefs were illiterate or almost so, and quite incapable by education and habits, of checking the accounts of their civil servants Nor would they undergo the drudgery of daily calling their collectors to account The result was that their entire revenue administration was left to their Brahman diwans and Prabhu clerks, and these men were notorious for their love of peculation and ignorance of the economic law that the revenue cannot be increased simply by squeezing the peasantry The rapacious and inefficient government of the Maratha agents in Hindustan kept lawlessness always raging in their *jāgirs*, and the desolated land could yield no produce for feeding the population or paying for the administration Thomas Twining who travelled through the Upper Doab from Farrukhabad *via* Firuzabad to Agra, Mathurā and Delhi, and back from Delhi *via* Bulandshahar, Khurjā, Koil, Kāsganj Dārāganj and Farrukhabad to Fathgarh, in November and December 1794, has left a sad picture of the ruin of agriculture, destruction of the population and widespread brigandage throughout the region, the only oases in this wilderness of anarchy were some villages peacefully cultivated under the strong protection of De Boigne's agents

On the other hand, the incompetence and venality of the Maratha civil officers were notorious As De Boigne wrote in a private letter, in March 1794,—"The pandits who have the management of all business at Sindhia's Court, will never put aside the old way of embezzling the half of

Marathas is to pass by their hands, which is so familiar in every generation that it is not thought so much as to take any notice of it.

Finally the Frenchmen developed the economic resources of their fiefs to an extent inconceivable to the Marathas.

De Boigne was the first to settle European indigo-planters in the Aligarh district. They were Monsieur Jourdan (at Khair), Mr. Orr (at Mendu), John Thornton [illegible] and William L. Longcroft (at Koil and Jalali), and Robinson and Stewart (at Mālon and Allahdad-pur). Indigo was then the chief export of the district and it used to be shipped at Farrukhabad down the Ganges for Calcutta.

At the beginning of 1792 a European coming with an introduction from the British Resident at Lucknow, met De Boigne at Khurja and took from him a lease of the indigo production in Khurja, Jalesar and some other mahals for three lakhs of Rupees a year. Thomas Longcroft who managed the factory at Jalali, told Twining that in 1794 he produced 3,000 maunds of finished indigo, and in good seasons 5,000 maunds. The price of a maund of indigo in 1800 was Rs. 200 or a little more. If this rate obtained in 1794, then the single factory at Jalali used to earn from six to ten lakhs of rupees in one year. How much could a Maratha jagirdar get out of the same district under this regime?*

Next to indigo the most important export of De Boigne's district was saltpetre, in which India had a monopoly of the European market during the wars of the French Revolution. In 1876, the Aligarh district produced 50,000 maunds of refined saltpetre. Supposing that in 1794 the

* Indigo in Aligarh, Atkinson N.W.P. Gaz., ii. 472-473. Lease granted by De Boigne, DY. ii. 85. Longcroft, Twining's *Travels in India*, 287-288,—"I observed (to Longcroft) that with one or two good years he would be able to return to Europe with a fortune." Saltpetre, Atkinson, ii. 476, Twining, p. 218 (price).

yield was the same, this commodity (of which the price in Calcutta was Rs 6 a maund) alone fetched three lakhs of rupees a year It went by boat from Farrukhabad to Calcutta for exportation to Europe

The remedy tried by the two Maratha chiefs in Hindustan to secure better revenue, made the disease worse Mahadji Sindhia constantly changed his diwān in a vain attempt to collect a higher proportion of his dues from the ryots and the feudatories, but this policy only led to a greater desolation of the land and squeezing of the peasantry It is admitted that his actual collection fell to one-tenth of the standard revenue in many places [*H P* 607] Tukoji Holkar followed the cruder method of putting his Brahman diwāns to torture, but even he could not draw blood out of stone The dishonesty and incapacity of the Maratha civil servants and their masters' lack of far sight in administration and of statesmanship in policy, destroyed all chances of their repeating the financial successes of De Boigne or Perron

The effect of this financial stringency was aggravated by the short-sighted selfishness of every Maratha prince, he built up a private treasure-hoard of his own while letting his State go to the dogs for lack of the necessary income As Captain Broughton wrote from Daulat Rao Sindhia's camp in May 1809,—"While Sindhia is daily submitting to these and similar insults [from his starving unpaid soldiery and servants], he possesses a privy purse, stocked, it is said, to the amount of fifty lakhs, which no distress either to himself or his troops is sufficiently powerful to induce him to violate, it being an established rule to put as much as possible into it but never to take anything out" [*Letters from a Maratha Camp*, p 106]

Even from the tributary princes of Rajputana, De Boigne and Perron could more easily realise the promised instalments, because these princes knew that the European generals were men of their words and would hold strictly to their engagements without trying to extort a rupee more

as the Maratha agents usually did. And these foreign generals rendered to the Rajput Rajas valuable services in return for the tribute paid, by putting down their rebel nobles and recovering particular districts from the hands of usurpers. This fact is illustrated in extant Persian letters from De Boigne to the Raja of Jaipur and from Perron to the Regent of Kota.

§ 7. *De Boigne's Corps: its organisation fully described, its finances accounted for.*

We possess the most correct description of the strength and organisation of De Boigne's corps, in an official note prepared for the Governor General Sir John Shore in Nov. 1793, and printed by me in the *Poona Residency Correspondence* series, Vol. i, pp. 392-397.

At that time the corps contained two brigades of regular infantry. Each brigade had ten battalions of which six were armed with muskets (i.e., flintlocks) and called Telingās, and four with matchlocks called Najibs (an inferior class composed of Pathans, dressed in the Persian style). Eight companies, each of 68 men (namely 52 privates, 12 officers, two bandsmen and two *bhistis*) formed a battalion, which by adding 23 members of the staff (namely 10 officers, one surgeon, two clerks, three couriers, one bhisti major, five musket-stock makers and one pandit) gave a total strength of 567 men. Besides these, twenty-four recruits under four officers were attached to each battalion like apprentices, but they did not count in actions. (They drew two annas a day until incorporated in the rank and file at Rs. 5 a month.)

Each battalion had two European officers, namely a Captain on Rs. 400 and a lieutenant on Rs. 200, and one European sergeant-Major on Rs. 60. The highest Indian officer was the subahdar on Rs. 30 a month.

To each brigade, 1,000 Ruhelas were attached, in order to spare the regular troops the exertion of attacking hills, fortified villages, &c. They were called the *Ali-ghol*

The cavalry was made up of two distinct bodies: (*i*) the Guard Regiment or Regulars and (*ii*) the horsemen attached to each brigade.

The Regiment of Regular Cavalry was mounted on good horses which were the property of De Boigne (almost exclusively of the bay colour, and each worth, on an average, from three to four hundred rupees—Twining 276.) It was a choice corps, magnificently equipped and mounted in imitation of the famous and costly Bengal Cavalry of the East India Company, and it really formed the guard of De Boigne for ceremonial occasions. This Regiment was made up of 300 men and officers, sub-divided into four *risālas* of four platoons each. By adding 75 irregular horse for skirmishing and 32 gunners for the four galloper guns attached to it, the full strength of the corps was raised to 407 men and horses. De Boigne, when leaving India, sold this cavalry regiment and its horses and equipment to the British for Rs. 1,60,000. [*P R C.* viii. 203.]

To each brigade of infantry were attached two *risālas* of regular horse (150 men and officers) and 50 irregulars composed of the bravest and best mounted men for skirmishing, reconnoitring, &c. These were all *silahdārs, i e.*, they had to provide and feed their own horses, for a higher pay (double for the officers and treble for the troopers) than the Guard Regiment. No European was employed in the cavalry.

De Boigne's genius was best shown in the creation of his artillery and supply services, and his foresight in this field may excite our admiration even today. No other campoo had even a tenth of his efficient arrangement.

Each infantry battalion had five guns attached to it, making a total of 100 field pieces for the 20 battalions of of the two brigades. Four galloper guns (three pounders) were attached to the Regiment of Cavalry. In addition there was the great Park of Artillery with an establishment of a thousand men. The ammunition carried into the field was provided on a liberal scale unknown elsewhere in India,

namely 40 rounds of grape and 12 shells for each howitzer, 400 rounds for each three-pounder and 300 rounds for each six-pounder field-piece. Each gun was drawn by eight bullocks, and its tumbril by 12 bullocks. The gallopers were drawn each by two horses. Eight mounted gunners worked a galloper; it was *never* unlimbered, so as to be ready for firing without a moment's delay. Four camels carried 240 rounds in all for each galloper.

His army service branch was fully organized. Each battalion had two camels to carry 8 large bell-tents, principally intended for the sick; two other camels carried the tents of the *Golandazes, Khalasis,* &c. attached to the guns, and 16 camels the sepoys' baggage,—a total of 20 camels; also two hackery carts to carry the arms of the sick, the tools of the sappers and wood-cutters, the foraging ropes, &c.

In the campaign in Rajputana, camels carried large leather-bags full of water into the field for refreshing his soldiers. The Marathas had no such arrangement, and Holkar's troops at Lakheri suffered unspeakable agonies for this neglect.

De Boigne's consideration for his soldiers was unapproached by any Indian prince. "Every officer and soldier when wounded received a certain present, in proportion to his wound, from 15 days to 3 or 4 months' pay, without any stoppage of pay during the time of his cure. The disabled of his army had a pension for life to the amount of half their pay, and lands besides; and the relations of the killed and of those who died of their wounds got the property of the deceased." (L. F. Smith, as quoted in Atkinson, ii. 113.)

At Firuzabad De Boigne established his arsenal for making muskets. His gun-foundries were in charge of Sangster, originally a Scottish watch-maker who possessed great mechanical talent and had obtained the command of Rene Madec's corps, after it was sold to the Rana of Gohad; in 1784 he passed into Sindhia's service on the submission of the Rana.

"Sangster was a Scotchman In the work of casting cannon and manufacturing small arms, he was an expert The cannon he turned out could compare with the best the (E I) Company manufactured, whilst his muskets, produced at a cost of ten rupees each, were excellent in every respect, superior to anything then in the hands of the native Powers, and almost equal in finish and durability to weapons made in Europe De Boigne at first appointed him to the charge of the arsenal at Agra In process of time other arsenals and magazines were established at Mathura, Delhi, Gwalior, Kalpi and Gohad, of all of which he had the superintendence (Twining mentions his musket factory at Firuzabad also and the Chambery *Mémoire* of De Boigne, cannon foundries at Hodal and Palwal) The cannon-balls were cast at Gwalior, where there were very fine iron mines, and gunpowder was manufactured at Agra, the saltpetre and sulphur being imported from Bikanir" (H Compton, 17 and 387 Twining, 187)

In the last decade of the 18th century the fire-power of the campoo was greatly increased by the constant drilling of the sepoys by De Boigne and his European officers and the use of brass screw-guns, devised and cast by European engineers, which excited the admiration of Wellington That general wrote after his victory at Assaye, "We have got more than 90 guns, seventy of which are the finest brass ordnance I have ever seen" The ordnance captured from Sindhia's northern army after the battle of Delhi (11 Sep 1803) are thus described—"The iron guns are of European manufacture, the brass guns, mortars and howitzers have been cast in India (at Mathurā, Ujjain, &c), but the whole are evidently from the design and execution of an European artist The workmanship is of as high a finish as any in the (E I) Company's arsenal The whole of the pieces are furnished with well-made elevating screws, some are of the latest French improvement The (gun-) carriages are strong and good, some are neatly made according to

the French pattern." (Wellington's *Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 180. *Wellesley Despatches*, iii. 668.)

In the armament of our indigenous armies there was nothing approaching these guns in the rapidity, volume and devastating effect of their grape-firing.

§ 8. *De Boigne's service history under Sindhia*

We can trace the growth of De Boigne's corps and of his military feats with full details and exact dates, from the Marathi despatches and Persian news-letters, and thus correct the many errors found in the English and French books on that general, particularly Herbert Compton's *Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers in India*. De Boigne (Le borgne de Boigne) first joined Sindhia's army as an officer of his General Apa Khande Rao at the end of 1784, and first saw service in the Bundelkhand campaign of that chief (1785). Along with Apa Khandé Rao he came to Sindhia's camp before Lalsot on 26th June 1787, at the head of two battalions of trained sepoys (1,300 bayonets in all.) He and his men fought for Mahādji most loyally during the reverses that followed the Lālsot campaign for a year. But on 17th June 1788 the tide turned. De Boigne's two battalions and one of Lesteneau greatly assisted in Sindhia's decisive victory over Mirza Ismail Beg outside Agra on that day.

Lesteneau was an older soldier than De Boigne and with a longer Indian experience gained in the armies of Najaf Khan and the Jat Rajah. While pursuing Ghulām Qadir in December 1788 he captured that Ruhelā's saddle-bags stuffed with looted jewels, and on returning to Agra he drew his soldiers' pay from Sindhia but escaped to Europe with all that cash and his jewellery[*] (early in 1789).

[*] The name is [illegible] spelt also *Lestenau* and *Lestineau* [illegible] appears in 1813 in the travels of Lady Hester Stanhope in Syria as "a strange, ragged individual with long uncombed hair, and wild burning eyes", who persuaded Lady Hester by serenading her that he was a religious mystic, a visionary prophet with mad eyes, foretelling the doom of Europe. The gullible lady crowed very much indeed in giving the following history of Lestenau: "A Bearnese adventurer, he had left home to seek adven-

His deserted sepoys broke out in mutiny for their eight months' arrears of pay Mahādji, by the advice of De Boigne compounded their claims for one-half in cash, and disbanded the battalion But the officers were retained, and the best of the privates were re-enlisted by De Boigne to form a new battalion

Throughout the year 1789, Mahādji was heavily involved in financial difficulties He was over head and ears in debt, and owed 34 months' salary to his Deccani troops When, therefore, De Boigne asked for funds to expand his three battalions into a brigade, Mahādji refused, and the Savoyard General, unable to maintain his corps on mere credit gave up Sindhia's service and retired to Lucknow, where he engaged in a profitable trade along with his friend Claud Martin From March to August Mahādji's affairs were in confusion owing to his long illness followed by his quarrel with Ali Bahādur and Tukoji Holkar But in the early winter of that year, he was fully recovered, and a rupture with Mirzā Ismail Beg and in consequence of it a renewal of war with the Mirzā's pay-masters, the Rajahs of Jaipur and Marwar loomed nearer and nearer So, Mahādji sent an agent to De Boigne begging him to return to his service and raise a full brigade on his own terms De Boigne agreed, and promptly reached Mahādji's camp, (October 1789) He set himself to enlisting men and officers, providing them arms and uniforms, and establishing an arsenal and cannon-foundry of his own The three old battalions —two of his own and the third mainly made up of

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ture in the East The Rajah (Sindhia) gave him the command of a regiment His victories over the English (!!!) were so spectacular that in a few years he had become one of the wealthiest and most venerated men in the country Pigeon-blood rubies and enormous diamonds were showered on him by a grateful Rajah But in spite of being offered the pick of the Rajah's concubines, he married a French girl, who bore him several children, and as soon as they were old enough to travel, he returned to France, after an absence of 18 years, where he lost his all in the Revolution and speculations On the way back to India he fell seriously ill at Acre and the disease affected his brain' In 1820, his son, an ex-officer of Napoleon's Imperial Guard, came to Syria in search of his old father and became Lady Hester's lover J Haslip, *Lady Hester Stanhope*, Ch 20 & 23

Lestineau's disbanded men formed the nucleus of this brigade, and eight more battalions were composed of new recruits from the Doab and Oudh territory.* Five months of constant drilling by their European officers, often under De Boigne's own eyes, turned them into first class soldiers, and when they were sent to Rajputana under Gopāl Bhāu they won the astonishing victories of Patan (20th June) and Merta (10th September 1790.)

After these unquestionable successes De Boigne's command was increased by adding a second brigade, and for their maintenance a military fief of the value of 12 lakhs of Rupees was granted to him by Sindhia as from the imperial Government. The grant is reported in a Marathi letter of 23rd August 1791, and it included Bāh-Panāhat in the Agra district and Jālesar (then attached to the Mathura but later to the Agra district.) *DY* ii 27, *HP* 570)

Still later, after his victory over Holkar at Lakheri (1st June 1793) De Boigne was commissioned to raise a third brigade and his personal emoluments were more than doubled. So in July 1793, he was given a fresh military fief made up of 52 parganahs and worth 27 lakhs of Rupees a year, absorbing his first and smaller fief. The annual expense of the two brigades was 18 lakhs of Rupees.†

His jagir now consisted of two large areas, one in the central Doab with Koil (Aligarh) for its headquarters and another in Mewat (Gurgaon district). The following mahals

* W. Palmer, [illegible] Resident [illegible] Sindhia, [illegible] on 28th January 1790, [illegible] "The [illegible] raised by M. De Boigne [illegible] of [illegible] 5,000 [illegible] and 500 [illegible]." (*PRC* [illegible] No. 2?7). [illegible] Sindhia's camp, reported early in March [illegible] formed [illegible] composed of eleven battalions." (*HP* No. 570). The number of battalions was evidently increased to 13 before the battle of Merta. [illegible]

† [illegible] 101. [illegible] Hāpur and Garh Muktesar were also included, [illegible] in *DY* ii [illegible]. He held [illegible] in 1794 [illegible] *DY* ii 8?, *PRC* [illegible] No. 283 and 284. Atkinson, ii 114. Compton 277. Martineau, [illegible] 2. The annual cost of a brigade was Rs. [illegible] in Hindustan, and half as much again (as *bhata*) when serving south of the Chambal, which would raise it to ten lakhs. Besides this, De Boigne enjoyed a personal jagir of Rs. 1,?0,500 a year on both sides of the Jamuna.

are specially named—Firuzābād, Hathiās, Khurjā and Koil (all in the Doāb) and Palwal, Hodal and Sohnā (all in the Gurgaon district)

Perron raised a fourth brigade at the end of 1801 and a fifth in 1802 His total revenue collection in 1802 reached 80 lakhs of Rupees a year, the Doab mahals alone yielding 75 lakhs. At the moment of his submission to the English (Sep 1803), he had under him 5 brigades, formed by 40 battalions of 700 men each, 5,000 cavalry, and 6,240 men in the artillery,—a total of 39 000 souls

§ 9 *De Boigne's character*

De Boigne's success was due to his character and education, which placed him far above every other European military adventurer in India His admiring follower, L F Smith thus describes him —

"De Boigne was active and persevering to a degree which can only be believed by those who were spectators of his indefatigable labours I have seen him daily and monthly rise with the sun, survey his arsenal view his troops, enlist recruits, direct the vast movements of three brigades,—encourage manufactures for their arms, ammunition and stores, harangue in his darbar give audience to ambassadors, administer justice, regulate the civil and revenue affairs of a *jāidād* of twenty lakhs of rupees, listen to a multitude of letters dictate replies, superintend a private trade of lakhs of rupees, keep his accounts, his private and public corresondence, and direct a most complex political machine " He added to a complete mastery of Oriental intrigue the political subtlety of the Italian school All these multifarious occupations, military political, administrative, and commercial, were conducted without assistance from others He never deputed authority, preferring to labour eighteen hours a day

"Above all stands De Boigne's staunch and unswerving loyalty (to Sindhia) His manners were polite and elegant, his disposition affable and vivacious, and he

was modest and good-natured in his behaviour towards his subordinates. His sense of justice was singularly well balanced between severity and mildness. As a general he he may take his stand amongst the greatest India has ever produced. In times of crisis and sudden danger his presence of mind was incomparable. (H. Compton, 102-105.)

"There was something in his face and bearing that depicted the hero, and compelled implicit obedience. He walked with the majestic tread of conscious greatness. The strong cast of his countenance and the piercing expression of his eyes indicated the force and power of his mind. He was at once dreaded and idolised, feared and admired, respected and beloved." (L. F. Smith.)

Perron, in contrast with De Boigne, was a vulgar upstart, possessed no doubt of great military talent, tenacious industry and cunning, but without any noble trait or cultivated manners, or even tact in dealing with others. His one aim in India was to build up a fortune which would enable him to live the life of a *Nabab* on return home, and he monopolised power solely as a means to that end. A Persian memoir written by a clerk in Delhi about 1830, gives an almost incredible picture of his licentiousness. (*Mafatih-ul-riāsat* by Sy. Md. Riza, Br. Mus. ms. *Or. 1752*, vi.) He died with the infamy of being regarded as a traitor to his Indian master and to his French homeland. (H. Compton 221-337. Martineau *Le Général Perron*, Paris, 1931.)

§ 10. *Begam Samru's Corps.*

The largest body of such foreigner-trained sepoys after the campoo of Mahadji Sindhia was the Sardhānā army, originally raised by Walter Reinhard and administered after his death (in May 1778) by his long-lived widow, the Begam Samru. As early as 1776, the Comte de Modave had noticed Reinhard's aversion to fighting lest he should lose any soldier. And his corps did not earn a better reputation for courage under his successors. This is the character given

to them by a European observer. "Samru's party was never famed for their military achievements. They never gained a gun, and never lost one until they were defeated by the British at Assaye. Samru was distinguished for his excellent retreats. He was accustomed to draw up his men in line, fire a few shots, form a square, and retreat, so that if his corps gained no laurels, they preserved their reputation. His troops were the most mutinous in India, and are said to have frequently attacked their own officers and beaten them with clubs." (Modave, tr. by me in *Bengal Past and Present*, Apr. 1936. Atkinson's *N. W. P. Gazetteer*, vol. II, p. 96.)

§ 11. *The Peshwa's Europeanised force*

The campoo touched the lowest depth of degradation in the "Europeanised" corps of the Peshwa. Its composition in 1787 was made up of one captain and 32 European soldiers and 44 Goanese Christians, together with 183 *gardis* or trained Indian musketeers, a total of 260 men. In addition there was a Portuguese artillery captain miscalled *Musa Naras* in Marathi, *i.e.*, Senor Noronha, who served the Peshwa from before 1779 till after 1798, and distinguished himself in the fight with the English at Talegaon (in January 1779). Two other captains in this service are known, namely Boyd the American and William Tone the Irishman. The miserable condition of the Peshwa's campoo is graphically described by Major Dirom, who saw them in the train of Hari Pant Phādké and Parashuram Bhāu Patwardhan in Cornwallis's war with Tipu in May 1791. He writes, "The Maratha infantry is composed of black Christians, and despicable poor wretches of the lowest caste, uniform in nothing but the bad state of their muskets, none of which are either clean or complete; and few are provided with either ammunition or accoutrements. They are commanded by half-caste people of Portuguese and French extraction, who draw off the attention of the spectators from the bad clothing of their men, by the profusion

of antiquated lace bestowed on their own; and if there happens to be a few (pure) Europeans among the officers and men which is sometimes the case, they execrate the service and deplore their fate."*

* In 179[illegible] [illegible] *P. [illegible]*, No. 393. In 1779 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] *Dictionary of American National Biography*. From the [illegible] service, he went over to the Peshwa in 179[illegible] [illegible] his corps of [illegible] (H. Compound) [illegible] joined soon after, [illegible] [illegible] Holkar's [illegible] in which he fell in 1802. He is the author of a valuable [illegible] on *Some Institutions of the Maratha people* (on the form of letters from Puna, 18 June – 19 Dec. 1796). Duff's *Narrative of the [illegible] in India* (1798 [illegible]), p. 11. In October 1796, "the corps of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] comprehends the whole of the regular infantry of the Peshwa's [illegible]." Tone's letter in [illegible] *Register* for 1803, Misc. [illegible] p. 67.

CHAPTER XLII

THE SINDHIAS IN PUNĀ, 1792-1799

§ 1 *What Mahādji Sindhia sought at the Peshwā's Court*

When in February 1792 Mahādji Sindhiā left Ujjain on return to Punā, he had been an exile from his native land for eleven years These long years had been filled for him with ceaseless striving He had fought in many a field and planted the Maratha banner on many a historic place He had risen to unimaginable heights of glory, and had also, at times, seemed to touch the lowest depth of ruin, but he had not once left the northern theatre of his activity And now that he had made himself the supreme dominator of Indian politics, what sort of reception would he find from his master? With many hopes and no little misgiving too, did he contemplate his coming audience with the Peshwā and the Peshwā's masterful minister Nānā Fadnis

During Mahādji's absence from Mahārāshtra his fame had filled the country A generation had grown up from boyhood to manhood in the Southern land who were eager to see the face of the man who had made the Marātha name great as never before His home-coming reminded men of the tales they had heard from their grandfathers of the splendour and national exultation at Bāji Rao I's return to Punā after humbling Asaf Jāh at Bhopāl (1738), or Chimnāji Apā's triumphal entry after the conquest of Mālwā (1729) But Sindhiā had raised the Marātha State to greater heights than these two military conquerors could do. They had brought back only treasure and trophies ; he had created a Marātha Empire, he had made the Peshwā—through his vicar—the dictator of the Mughal Empire and also the protector of the noblest Rajput royal house,

marriage into which was the supreme dream of every aspiring Kshatriya prince. And behind these political gains of Sindhia stood an invincible army, which was sorely needed at home for a rough settling of accounts with that eternally defaulting debtor the Subahdar of Mughal Deccan, and for checking the ambition of the English to "thrust their feet into Mahārāshtra." The report of Mahādji's coming sent a thrill of pride and expectancy throughout his native land. The curious longed to gaze at him and his soldiers who had tamed the pride of Mughal and Ruhela, Kachhwā and Rathor alike. The oppressed looked up to Mahadji's intervention as the only means of redressing their wrongs at the hands of the Punā Government.

But quite other feelings animated the breast of the man who conducted the Government of Punā. Nānā Fadnis quaked in fear lest the victor of Patan and Merta should push him away from the control of the Maratha Central Government which he had exercised for fourteen years now. Nānā was extremely unpopular on account of his parsimony and greed of power and wealth, and the rigid control and joyless decorum of his administrative policy. His miserliness in expenditure prevented the ambitious and the violent from "feeding themselves" at the public expense. But the economy of Nanā Fadnis was not the unselfish guardianship of the public funds that marked the administration of John De Witt (the Grand Pensionary of Holland) or of William Pitt (the Prime Minister of George III.) The Chitpavan Machiavel (as his modern admirers in Punā love to call him) practised stringency in public expenditure only to increase his private hoard, which had in Oct. 1792 reached two krores of rupees by his own admission. No part of it was spent in strengthening the national defence or improving the people's lot. At the same time his grasping at all authority in the State and his personal vices (pandered to by Ghāsirām the Police Prefect of Punā) had raised against him a host of enemies, who fretted in impotent rage. Hence Nānā rightly feared a

gathering of his enemies around Mahādji with a view to overwhelming him

Or, what would be equally ruinous to him, the glamour of Sindhia's military triumphs in the North and the imperial titles and decorations that he had brought from Delhi for his master, added to the personal charm of that genial man of action would enchant the heart of the Peshwā, now about to step out of his minority—and incline him to discard the morose, stingy, ever-censorious old minister and give the ministry to the great soldier

At the first reports of Mahādji's march to the south, Nānā Fadnis was shaken by a wild fear that he would be treated by Mahādji as he himself had treated Sakhārām Bāpu So, the minister for a time contemplated safety by retirement to Benares as a religious recluse and sounded the British Resident for a passport Next he formed the infamous scheme of hiring the hereditary enemy of his nation by surrendering the Marātha claims on the Nizām in return for his armed aid against Sindhia In the meantime he hastily called up his generals Hari Pant Fādké and Parashurām Bhāu Patwardhan to his side But Mahādji's honesty of purpose was transparent, wiser counsels prevailed with Nānā Fadnis, and Mahādji was received at the Peshwā's Court with apparent cordiality and due ceremony, on 22nd July, 1792

The first and formal interview being over, Mahādji turned to the serious business that had brought him to Punā He had come there not to receive his master's plaudits nor to read his history in his nation's eyes, but to ensure the durability of his life's work The subjects of his discussions with the Punā Government were two·—

First, he had to prove his claim to seven krores of rupees spent by him in the Peshwā's work in Hindustan, and secure payment of the amount so that he might discharge his own debt to the bankers

Secondly, for the smooth working and permanence of the Marātha overlordship in Hindustan, Holkar must be

excluded from that country and its charge placed exclusively in Sindhia's hands, with no rival agent of Punā to question his orders or thwart his policy. When these two points had been gained he wished to return to North India and resume his rule there in peace of mind.

§ 2. *Nānā Fadnis ruins Maratha national interests by selfishness and want of a statesmanly vision*

As regards Sindhiā's money claims, the wildest rumours born of ignorance filled the minds of the Punā ministry. When in December 1784, Mahādji was appointed regent of the Delhi Empire, the Marātha country believed that he had struck an inexhaustible mine of gold, and would henceforth not only pay his own troops but send every year millions of rupees out of the surplus revenue to feed the Punā Government.

It was the firm belief of Nānā Fadnis that Mahādji Sindhiā was hoarding all his income in the Delhi provinces by building up a private fortune of his own and dishonestly throwing the cost of his army on his master. First, Nānā's secret agent in the North secured from an imperial record keeper by a bribe of Rs. 3,500, a detailed copy of the official figures of the revenue of every village that had come into Mahādji's hands as the Emperor's manager. (*HP* 360.) Then in 1790 a list was sent to Nānā showing that Sindhiā had acquired in North India in cash and kind two krores and 96 lakhs of rupees, besides 815 pieces of artillery, in tribute collection and spoils of war up to that year. This was over and above the annual land revenue and custom duties of the country in his charge. (*Aiti Tipané*, ii No. 12.)

So when Mahādji surrounded by still unsubdued enemies in the North, had appealed to Punā for money aid, Nānā Fadnis had replied in exasperated tones,—"Unlike Visāji Krishna and Rāmchandra Ganesh of former times (1769-1773) Sindhiā is not sending to the Punā Govern-

ment accounts and balances of his collections in Jhānsi and Bundelkhand That money belongs to the Peshwā Patil Bābā imagines that the Government here has abundance of money, but it is not the case. Our debt to our troops is mounting higher Such is the pressure of want on us "*

The fact is, no one in Punā could realise how years of anarchy, war and famine had desolated the central part of the Delhi empire, large areas had lapsed into jungle, the population had been thinned, cultivation had shrunk, and the actual revenue collection had fallen to a tenth of the normal demand or even less No money aid was given by the Punā Government to Mahādji in his sorest need, but he was allowed, after the Lālsot disaster, to raise loans from the local bankers on his own account, under Nānā Fadnis's guarantee These he scrupulously repaid in a few years †

§ 3 *Puna Government's settlement with Mahādji*

Mahādji took with himself to Punā full and detailed accounts of the public income and expenditure in the Marātha sphere of influence in Northern India during his administration there from 1783 to 1791 These he produced in support of his claim to seven krores of rupees as due from the Peshwā. The Punā ministers, instigated by Holkar's local agents, raised the cry that the accounts were faked The long and angry discussions were ended and a settlement agreed to only after Lākheri (June 1793) had shown that it was a dangerous game to shilly-shally with the

* *Itti Tip* ii No 39 This letter was written on 2nd May 1790 On its being read out to Mahādji, he remarked in anger, "What is written here is very nice! We too have been out on campaign for six years Nānā Fadnis has not inquired into what each of us has achieved and the amounts of our gain and loss Let him depute an officer here to hold an investigation I will welcome such an inquiry, it will be to my interest Reward or punish me or Holkar after pursuing such an inquest to its conclusion, and not after hearing one side only"

† Nānā to Benares—*PRC* ii 136, 153 Nānā's treasure hoard, *ibid*, 153, his rigid economy, *ibid*, 175 Sindhiā's personal influence over the Peshwā, *ibid* 147 Discussion of Sindhiā's claims, *PRC* ii 150 153, 157, 194 (imp), Kharé, ix pp 4601, 4632 Sātārā, i 368, 288 Holkar's objection—*Hingané Daftar*, ii No 93

victor in that battle. The Punā Court admitted that five krores were due to Sindhiā as excess expenditure justly incurred in doing his master's work.

The next question was how to pay him this sum. Mahādji Sindhiā suggested an easy method. In the nine years since 1783 he had won territories in Northern India with a nominal rent-roll of one krore or a krore and a half of rupees. In this territory the revenue was shared and collected by Sindhia, Holkar and the Peshwā (the last through the agency of Ali Bahadur, Vinchurkar, Pawār, &c.) in certain fixed proportions. Mahādji did not demand the repayment of his admitted loan of five krores now in cash, but proposed that the North Indian territories belonging to the Peshwā's share should be placed in his (*i.e.*, Mahādji's) charge and he would gradually recover the total amount from their annual surplus.

But Nānā Fadnis would not agree to handing over Hindustan to Sindhiā's undivided control; his whole policy was to keep other generals like Holkar and Ali Bahādur there as a check on Sindhiā, and he only made futile counter-proposals for paying Sindhiā's dues from Punā as the Peshwā's Government would find it convenient.

The total exclusion of the Holkar family from the Delhi sphere of influence was a bitter pill for Tukoji Holkar to swallow; he refused to give up his *jāgirs* and rights in the Doāb and Rajputana and seek compensation by invading Cutch-Bhuj or the Cis-Satlaj Sikh country as was proposed by Sindhiā. And Nānā had not the force to effect Holkar's removal from Hindustan even if he had the wish for it.

Thus, the long negotiations came to nothing tangible, and at the beginning of 1794 Sindhiā was still pursuing the mirage of an amicable settlement with Nānā Fadnis, when his dreams and worries alike were ended by a short four days' fever, on 12th February. In the ashes of his funeral pyre outside Punā perished also the hope of a Marātha empire in Hindustan, but the grouping of Powers on the

political chess-board in Europe and India concealed this fact for ten years

§ 4 *Death of the Peshwā (October 1795), Nānā Fadnis's intrigues against Bāji Rao II*

During the years 1793 and 1794, the thoughts of the Punā ministers were absorbed by one problem which only grew in urgency with the passing of months Their Government had been working under a heavy deficit for years, and the addition of the many krores adjudged as due to Mahādji Sindhiā by the settlement of September 1793 would make the financial burden unbearable to their insolvent State Yet there was money in sight, if only it could be got at The Nizām of Haidarabad owed several krores to the Peshwā as war indemnity and *chauth*, but for many years past he had evaded payment The problem for the Peshwā's ministers was how to make this defaulting debtor honour his treaty obligations Diplomatic discussions, appeals to friendly Powers for mediation, and even threats of coercion failed to move the Haidarabad Government to a settlement of the claim The Nizām's ministers,—whom the Governor-General Sir John Shore at this time aptly called 'foxes in their holes'—were passed masters in the use of delaying tactics, duplicity and evasion The Nizām possessed an immense hoard of treasure, but he would not touch it His ministers intrigued with all the enemies of the Peshwā and fomented the jealous quarrels among the Marātha sardārs in order to prevent a decision and thus put off the evil day

At last the Marātha Government's patience was worn out, and they decided to use the only argument which the Court of Haidarabad ever understood In January 1795 a vast Maratha army set out from Punā under Nānā Fadnis, the Peshwā, and Parashurām Bhāu Patwardhan This was the last time that all the Marātha sardārs without any exception, gathered under the national banner in the field After a short campaign, marked only by the cowardice and folly

of Nizām Ali Khan, he was driven into the village of Khardā (11th March) and there forced to make a complete submission promising an indemnity of five krores (payable in three years) and a cession of territory worth 30 lakhs a year, and delivering his minister Mushir-ul-mulk into the hands of the Marāthas as a hostage

The treaty was concluded on 27th March But only seven months after it, an event happened which nullified all the gains of the treaty and brought to the Peshwā's throne its destined destroyer Bāji Rao II The young Peshwa Madhav Rao II died of an accident on 27th October 1795 and a scene of hopeless bewilderment and mischief opened in Puna Two months later General De Boigne who had served as a sobering influence on Daulat Rao Sindhiā, left his service for return to Europe, and that young prince was left free to prance to self destruction

The story of the revolutions that began in Punā in 1795 is no doubt the direct concern of the historian of Mahārāshtra But as their repercussion naturally shook the Marātha administration in Hindustan, the present history must trace their course, though in outline only

The nearest heir of the dead Peshwā was Bāji Rao, the eldest son of that Raghunāth Dādā who had sat on an uneasy throne for eight months after the murder of Nārayan Rao Peshwā in August 1773 Nānā Fadnis had effectually kept him out of power and relentlessly tracked down and punished with death or torture every participant in the conspiracy against Narāyan Rao and every leading supporter of Raghunāth Moreover, he had doomed Raghunāth Dādā, his wife, and three sons (Bāji Rao and Chimnaji Apā sprung from his own loins, and Amrit Rao an adopted son) to long and humiliating captivity Their hearts were sore against him, and if Bāji Rao now gained the throne Nānā Fadnis would inevitably lose his power and wealth, and if he escaped death by reason of his sacred caste, he would certainly be subjected to public humiliation and secret torture

Nānā Fadnis's one thought was how to keep Bāji Rao out of the succession He proposed to set aside the entire house of Raghunāth Dādā as blood-stained, and give the Peshwāship to a boy from a collateral line to be adopted by the last Peshwā's widow as her son Nearly all the chief men in the State objected to this violation of hereditary right Then Nānā changed his plan, he would make Raghunāth's younger son Chimnāji Apā, a boy of eleven Peshwā (Feb 1796), so that the old minister might enjoy a further long lease of power as the guardian of the minor This proposal also met with public disapproval

Four months were wasted by Nānā Fadnis in these manoeuvres and indecision, till all his supporters abandoned him and he was driven to come to terms with Bāji Rao, who had secretly won over Daulat Rao Sindhiā (through his minister Bālobā Pāgnis) by promising to pay him 1¼ krores of Rupees in cash and lands worth 25 lakhs a year, as the price of his support On 11th March 1796, Bāji Rao and Nānā Fadnis made a solemn pact by which they guaranteed each other's position as Peshwā and prime minister, without the intervention of Sindhiā, who thus lost his claim to the money promised before It bitterly antagonised Daulat Rao, and started a series of almost kaleidoscopic changes Nānā, finding his own life in danger from Sindhiā's troops, suddenly left Punā (21st March) and went to Satara and thence to Mahād in the western hills Punā was left without a master

§ 5 *Chimnāji made Peshwā Daulat Rao supreme in Punā (May 1796)*

At last, Parashurām Bhāu forced the late Peshwā's widow to adopt Chimnāji Apa as her son (25th May) and had him invested in the Peshwā's robes on 2nd June, while Bāji Rao was kept a close prisoner in Daulat Rao's camp By this *coup*, Sindhia became the dominant factor in the Peshwā's Government Nānā Fadnis could not bear to part with a power which he had enjoyed for twenty years, nor

was he sure that when shorn of power he would be able to save from the grasp of his successor his hoarded treasure which rumour had swollen to nine krores of Rupees. "He now directed all the engine of his wealth and diplomacy to escape from Sindhia's clutches. From (his refuge in) Mahād, for full five months (June-November 1796) he exercised all his diplomatic skill and spent much of his treasure not only in keeping back Sindhia's forces from approaching him, but (also) in enlisting the support of several outside Powers."

Daulat Rao Sindhia's threat of attacking Nizām Ali to exact payment of the Khardā indemnity was Nānā Fadnis's opportunity. He made a secret pact with Mushir-ul-mulk (the Nizām's agent in Punā),[1] most selfishly bartering away all the national claims on the Nizām in exchange of his armed aid against Sindhia. He also formed a faction at home, among the jealous rivals of the house of Sindhia, such as Tukoji Holkar, Raghuji Bhonsle II, the Rajah of Kolhāpur, and Bābā Phādke. "But more than all else, Nānā managed to win over Bāji Rao himself to his plan. Bāji Rao was now a prisoner closely watched by Sindhia, who was going to deposit him as a life-prisoner in the fort of Asirgarh. To avoid such a fate, Bāji Rao readily listened to Nānā's overtures and the two became temporarily reconciled to each other."

§ 6. *Bāji Rao proclaimed Peshwā*

Nānā had an ally in the very citadel of his enemy. Sakharām Ghatgé, surnamed Sharzā Rao, was a Maratha of the sardar family of Kāgal, who had joined Nānā's personal guards as a poor military adventurer, and gained his confidence by his courage, loyalty and unscrupulous resource-

[1] Govind Rao Kāle arranged a secret treaty between Nānā and Nizām Ali which was signed on 7th Oct. 1796. By this contract all the huge war indemnities and cession of territory imposed upon the Haidarabad ruler, were entirely annulled, on condition that Nizām Ali whole-heartedly assisted in installing Bāji Rao in the Peshwāship with Nānā as the sole administrator. (Sardesai, iii. 318-320.) The quotations here are from Sardesai's *New History of the Marathas*, vol. III.

fulness When Nānā Fadnis fled away from Punā (March 1796) Sharzā Rao passed into Daulat Rao Sindhiā's service, and soon acquired the greatest influence over him, especially by holding out to his new master the bait of marriage with his beautiful young daughter Baizā Bāi, (a marriage which was eventually celebrated on 26th Feb 1798) He now worked in the interests of Bāji Rao, over whom Sindhiā had placed him as keeper Through Sharzā Rao, the prisoner opened communications with Nānā at Mahād for being declared as the Peshwā Nānā agreed and again through Sharzā Rao's secret insinuations managed to persuade Daulat Rao to arrest and confine both Bālobā Tātyā and Parashurām Bhāu who were then conducting the Government (26th October 1796) Chimnāji Apā was also removed from his throne and placed in detention Nānā Fadnis returned to Punā and there at a public ceremony (on 26th Nov) Bāji Rao II was proclaimed as Peshwā, and Nānā Fadnis became outwardly the supreme executive head of the Government again

The newly enthroned Shrimant immediately plunged into sensual enjoyment in private, while he made an outward show of constant religious devotion worthy of the priestly head of a "Government belonging to Brāhmans and cows" The ship of State without a helmsman drifted from bad to worse The veteran prime minister, though nominally restored to his supreme position, "remained sulking as a private onlooker, unable to exercise any effective control over the administration" As the price of this political *coup* all the claims on the Nizam were written off by Nānā

The derelict Punā Government was utterly insolvent Daulat Rao Sindhiā was no better off owing to his huge inflated army bill and shrunken revenue-collection from war-ravaged estates Though Bāji Rao devised and carried out ingenious schemes for squeezing money out of the people, his debts remained unpaid The first half of the year 1797 passed in this placid stagnation, till at last on

15th August, when Tukoji Holkar died, a storm burst on the Maratha Government, whose unforeseen consequence was to hasten the loss of Maratha independence.

§ 7. *Tukoji Holkar's sons,—his death (15 Aug. 1797). War among his sons.*

When Ahalyā Bāi, the widowed daughter-in-law of the founder of the house of Holkar, died (on 13th August 1795) she left no descendant in the male line behind her. During her long reign of nearly thirty years, her troops were led by Tukoji Holkar, a distant cousin, as her servant. After her death the Puna Government recognised Tukoji as the head of the Holkar State, because he was the only able and grown up member of the family and best known to the troops and the officials. But Tukoji was at that time a dying man. His health had broken down from drink, self-indulgence and slothfulness, and he was then living in Punā under medical treatment. As death came nearer Tukoji was filled with despair about the future of his dominions. He had four sons by three different wives. The eldest Kāshi Rao was a half-witted cripple, entirely dependent on others. The second son Malhar II, was an unmitigated ruffian; his insane pride, reckless violence, contempt for good counsel, habitual drunkenness, and incurable addiction to the predatory way of life brought him from the rank of a prince down to the level of the vulgar Pindhari looters who filled the Holkar army. His father confessed that every measure of love or harshness that he had taken had failed to reform this youth. For his brigandage he had been kept confined in a fort. His fatuous conduct in the Lākheri campaign was the shame and sorrow of his father's ministers.

Tukoji's third son Jaswant Rao, had a taint of insanity which burst out openly in his later life as the effect of his drug habit; but he was a youth of extraordinary courage, resourcefulness and adventurous spirit, though without a particle of that generosity and wisdom which a ruler of men ought to possess. The youngest Vitoji (born of the

same concubine-mother as Jaswant Rao), had been trained for no worthy work and naturally took to a life of robbery

Tukoji Holkar in his last days, declared Kāshi Rao as his successor and got from the Peshwā robes investing him as the head of the Holkar State (29th January 1797.) The storm-clouds immediately gathered Malhar demanded that Kāshi Rao should live at Maheshwar as the sleeping head of the State, while he himself should lead the army and conduct the administration as his regent or deputy Kāshi Rao naturally objected to being treated as a cypher Malhar immediately left his father's camp and took post at some distance, where he began to enlist soldiers Adventurers and criminals began to flock to such a master, raising his force to 1,500 men The old father in despair cried out, 'If in my very lifetime your brotherly love has turned into hatred and hostility, God knows how it will end after I am gone." But his entreaties to his sons to live in amity failed Jaswant Rao bade defiance to Kāshi Rao and joined Malhar, and so did Vitoji They openly vowed to wrest the sceptre from Kāshi Rao and put him in prison

The rebels sent off agents to stir up rebellion and raise money by plunder in the Mālwā and Khāndesh territories of their father In the midst of this threatening chaos, Tukoji Holkar closed his eyes on 15th August 1797 Kāshi Rao in self-defence bought Daulat Rao Sindhiā's armed aid for putting his rivals down The Sindhian ministers jumped at this opportunity of making the house of Holkar a helpless dependant of the house of Sindhia, and thus ending their acrimonious rivalry of the last two generations.

On 14th September a detachment of Sindhia's troops attacked Malhar Rao's camp by surprise, and that gallant prince was slain when resisting with only a dozen followers around him Jaswant Rao was wounded and fled away from

* Malhar's own mother warned Ahalya Bāi, "You are keeping Malhar with yourself, but you do not know his character!" *M Riyāsat*, Uttar II, p 25 Thakur, *Holkar Sadh*, i 268, 273, 260, 402 (confinement in a fort) The worthy son refused to see his mother's face *PRC* ii No 257, vi No 24-26 Mohan S

his dead brother's side, and after a time he made his way to Nāgpur, whose Raja had once been charged by Tukoji to protect Jaswant like his own son.

§ 8. *Daulat Rao Sindhiā dominant in Punā. Mahādji Sindhiā's widows are driven into war.*

Thus Daulat Rao Sindhiā was left dominant in Punā; Sharzā Rao Ghātgé was his chief counsellor and the Peshwā Bāji Rao his ally, while the ostensible wazir Nānā Fadnis sulked in impotence and intrigued secretly to thwart Sindhia and reduce his power. "Sindhiā's armed strength joined to Bāji Rao's wicked tendencies and guided by Sharzā Rao's vile counsel became now a terror to all chiefs, bankers and leaders in the Marātha State. ... While Nānā offered Daulat Rao a large sum for leaving Punā and going away, Bāji Rao at the same time went still further, promising Sindhiā two *krores* for saving him from Nānā's vengeance. ... Daulat Rao urged that he could not move unless his troops were paid. ... Bāji Rao said that he could not supply funds to Sindhiā; he held Nānā Fadnis responsible for his miseries, and gave a written permission to Sindhiā to seize Nānā's person and take away his treasure by force." (Sardesai iii. 331-333.) So, on the last day of the year 1797, Nānā Fadnis was treacherously arrested by Sindhia's captain Michael Filose and kept under detention in Daulat Rao's camp.

"The main object of the perpetrators was to squeeze as much treasure from the Minister, his friends and collaborators as possible. During this period Sharzā Rao and his henchmen perpetrated indescribable atrocities on the populace of Punā and its neighbourhood." But in March 1798 the widows of Mahādji Sindhiā threatened to march in force to Punā and appealed to the Peshwā to make Daulat Rao pay them the allowance worthy of the late chief's wives which Daulat Rao had promised them, but withheld so long. These ladies were loved and honoured by high and low alike, and they would form a centre round which the grow-

ing discontent against Daulat Rao's tyranny would rally and thus raise a formidable opposition to his power. The Shenvi party in the administration were then devoted adherents, and common enmity would also induce Nānā Fadnis to go to the same camp.

Sharzā Rao therefore struck quickly and struck hard. In the last week of March, he arrested Nārāyan Rao Bakhshi (the son of the famous general Jivā Dādā), Devji Gauli (a captain with a long record of distinguished service to the family), Rājaji Patil and Rāmji Patil and many other partisans of the widowed ladies. Next, Nānā Fadnis and Bālobā Tātyā were removed to Ahmadnagar fort for safer custody. When the Sindhian widows arrived at Koregāon Daulat Rao began to parley with them for a compromise. But Sharzā Rao entered their apartments, whipped them and dragged them out for being sent off to some prison-fort. Then a faithful old captain named Muzaffar Khan took up their cause, and a civil war on a vast scale broke out near Punā. The widows, led by Lakshmi Bāi on a State-elephant attacked Sindhiā's camp at Wanowri at midnight (8th June), and Daulat Rao was forced to promise compliance with their demands. But he used the respite thus gained to make a treacherous attack on their camps (25th June) at Bhāmburdā. The ladies took to a running fight and Daulat Rao, being quite unable to suppress them, restored Nānā Fadnis to liberty (15th July), as the only man who could conduct the administration and restore peace in the Peshwā's State. At the same time he threw Sharzā Rao into prison, as the root cause of all these troubles.

But Nānā Fadnis was no longer the dictator of the State that he had once been, and knowing his own really weak position he made no attempt to reform and stiffen the administration, but let matters drift. "Bāji Rao, utterly perplexed in the midst of the growing trouble, fell prostrate

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* The three wives were Lakshmi Bāi, Yamunā Bāi and Bhāgirathi Bāi. But a morganatic wife of Mahādji named Kesarji was highly praised for her wisdom and influence for good, and Daulat Rao used at first to take her advice (in 1794 and 1795 only). *Akh.*

before Nānā Fadnis and implored him to take charge of the administration again (14th Nov 1798) Nānā melted at this theatrical performance of the crafty Peshwā and resumed his work." The deceitful Bāji Rao, soon afterwards, changed his mind and secretly begged Daulat Rao not to go away from Punā, leaving him to the tender mercies of Nānā Fadnis and men like Bālobā Tātyā and Parashurām Bhāu Patwardhan who, Bāji Rao urged, would bring about his deposition and place the worthier Amrit Rao on the throne

Soon afterwards the Widows' rebellion moved southwards to Kolhapur and received full support from the local branch of the house of Shivāji (May 1799) Daulat Rao, finding the country turning against him, hurriedly brought Bālobā Tātyā out of confinement in Ahmadnagar and sent him along with Ābā Chitnis to meet the princesses and pacify them by swearing to provide their maintenance Thus by the end of August 1799, the Widows' War was temporarily closed

CHAPTER XLIII

LAKHWĀ DĀDĀ'S GOVERNORSHIP IN HINDUSTAN

§ 1 *The Shenvi Brahmans and their rivals the Chitnis family in Mahādji Sindhia's government*

Mahādji Sindhiā, as a shrewd judge of men, had maintained an admirable balance in his ministry by placing the civil administration in the hands of Deshastha Brāhmans and his army under Shenvi Brāhmans, these two groups, though theoretically branches of the same Brāhman caste, lived apart in their social relations, beyond the possibility of uniting or even fraternising The leaders of the Deshastha party were the three sons of Raghunāth Malhār Kulkarni of Nigodi, known as Ābā Chitnis, Krishnobā Chitnis, and Gopāl Bhāu Ābā was a civil administrator and financial manager of extraordinary capacity, Krishnobā also was a good secretary and accountant, while Gopāl Bhāu was Mahādji's dignified deputy in Hindustan and controlled the civil and military affairs of his absent master, but more as a viceroy than as a commander in the field, though all the generals were subordinate to him

Mahādji's army chiefs were all Shenvis, namely Jivāji Ballāl Kerkar (popularly known as Jivā Dādā Bakhshi), his son Nārāyan Jivāji, and first cousin Jagannāth Rām Krishna (popularly Jagu Bāpu), Lakshman Anant Lād (popularly known as Lakhwā Dādā) and Bālāji Anant Pingé (popularly Bālobā Tātyā Pāgnis),—the last being a minister in charge of army accounts and the patron of Lakhwā Dādā With them was associated another Shenvi Sadāshiv Malhār Bavlé (popularly Bhāu Bakhshi), nominally called the diwān, who acted as Sindhiā's foreign secretary in his dealings with the English

As long as Mahādji lived, his strong hand prevented these two caste-groups from quarrelling, and the administration was run with smooth efficiency. But immediately after his death, the balance was upset and a crisis precipitated in the Sindhian administration by Nānā Fadnis. Now was Nānā's chance for removing the last threat to his domination over the Peshwā's mind and making the house of Sindhiā as subordinate to him as any petty sardār of the Deccan. Abā Chitnis, hitherto Mahādji's chief minister, courted Nānā's support against his Shenvi rivals and promised subservience to his policy of making the Sindhias know their own place.

This alliance between Nānā and Abā was so notorious that the British Resident noticed it. But the result was just the opposite of what they had expected. It wounded the pride and self-interest of the house of Sindhiā. They could never forget that throughout Mahādji's career Nāna Fadnis had tried to thwart and humiliate him; he had not moved a finger to aid Mahādji during his life and death struggle with Ghulām Qādir, and when Mahādji had at last emerged victorious, Nāna had planted Holkar and Ali Bahādur as thorns in his sides to spoil his policy in the North. The mere fact of Abā Chitnis's friendship with Nānā Fadnis damned him effectually in the eyes of the Sindhian ladies. They persuaded Daulat Rao to safeguard his power and honour by placing his administration in the hands of the Shenvi officers who had for many years served Mahādji in the field and the cabinet so loyally. Therefore, about two months after Mahadji's death, Daulat Rao recalled to his cabinet Bhau Bakhshi and Bālobā Pāgnis, both of whom were then in political exile. Bhāu Bakhshi joined Daulat Rao's cabinet as diwān in Punā on 10th May. Abā Chitnis immediately took the alarm, resigned his post, and would listen to no persuasion to return. [*PRC* ii. 234, 238. Khare ix. p. 4814.]

The next step was to remove Chitnis's brother Gopāl Bhāu from the supreme command in Northern India and

appoint the Shenvi generals, Lakhwā Dādā and Jagu Bāpu to that charge. The news of the intended change reached the Marātha camps in Hindustan, and then began almost daily rows by the soldiers for their arrears of pay, while lawless men raised their heads on all sides and plundering bands began to roam through the country without fear. Both the factions courted De Boigne, the master of Sindhia's invincible brigades. Lakhwā Dādā's agent Imām Bakhsh waited on De Boigne for a month, soliciting him to join the Pagnis party, but the General frankly told him, "Daulat Rao is our master. I shall obey any one whom he appoints as his prime minister." So the envoy returned with failure.

But at the same time, De Boigne considered it his duty to warn Daulat Rao that the removal of an exceptionally able and experienced governor like Gopāl Bhāu would throw his entire North Indian administration into confusion and De Boigne himself would not be able to maintain order there. Shah Alam also, sent a secret message to the Peshwā, through the Maratha Resident in Delhi, pointing out that Bālobā Pāgnis had been once dismissed by Mahādji as a failure and Abā Chitnis had been solicited by him to resume the premier's office which he had filled to the Emperor's entire satisfaction ever since. It was, as Shah Alam argued, a ruinous mistake to replace such a tried minister as Abā by a man of proved incompetence like Bālobā. But all these arguments proved useless when weighed against the threat of Nānā Fadnis's hidden hand working against Sindhia's prestige and wealth. [*DY.* ii. 120, 133, 119, 121. *Hingne D.* ii. 97.]

§ 2. *Lakhwā Dādā is appointed Sindhia's viceroy in Hindustan, (Nov. 1794), his difficulties.*

Lakhwā Dādā in concert with Jagu Bāpu, took charge of his office as Sindhiā's viceroy in Northern India, on 1st November 1794. His dismissed predecessor Gopāl Bhāu accompanied by his family took refuge in De Boigne's

camp, seeking protection from the violence of his long unpaid soldiery.

Lakshman Anant Lād, popularly called Lakhwā Dādā, was an officer of outstanding ability and character. During the eclipse of Mahādji Sindhiā after Lālsot, he had defended Agra fort against the combined forces of Ghulām Qādir and Ismail Beg for nine months, with matchless courage, tenacity and alertness (Ch. 36 § 3.) Later he had distinguished himself in some other campaigns. His political sagacity equalled his generalship. Like his master Mahādji, he had the wisdom to treat the English Power with courtesy and friendliness. The British Resident, Colonel Palmer, "lamented the fall of Lakhwā Dādā (in November 1796) on account of his personal character, which for mildness and moderation exceeds that of any Maratha I know." (*PRC* viii. 12, 217.)

It was to no bed of roses that Lakhwā Dādā succeeded when he became Sindhiā's viceroy of North India. During the month before, De Boigne had realised some lakhs as tribute from Jaipur and Māchen, but he had spent this money in paying the salaries of the regular corps (*paltan*) under himself only, while the indigenous Deccani cavalry and the North Indian irregulars (*fauj*) received no part of their long standing dues. A bitter quarrel broke out between the two sections of Sindhia's army in the North, and it led to rioting, in the course of which the Regulars wounded eight men of the Silahdār cavalry. The indigenous troops vowed vengeance, but Bālobā Pāgnis's agent pacified them by promising that Lakhwa Dādā would satisfy their claims on returning to his head quarters in Mathurā,—as if the new viceroy could coin money (*DY* ii. 138, 139).

The financial mismanagement of the Marātha administrators in the North and South alike, foredoomed their dream of *Hindupat Pādshāhi* (paramountcy over all India) to utter futility. As the British Resident, Colonel William Palmer, wrote during a visit to Lakhwā's camp in Mathurā in April 1795,—

"The officers who have lately succeeded to the administration of the Maratha affairs in Hindustan found them in a state of very alarming disorder, the revenues grossly mismanaged or embezzled and the collections so reduced as to be very inadequate to the expenses of Government The Deccan troops and Hindustani Irregulars mutinous and disaffected for want of pay, and with difficulty restrained from the greatest outrages by the corps under Mons De Boigne, the tributary Rajahs retaining their respective contributions and preparing to resist the future exaction of them, the Sikhs ready to invade and ravage the western provinces

"The Maratha State is but ill-qualified for permanent conquest or civil government, however formidable may be the means which it possesses of ravage and devastation The whole country under its subjection from the Chambal to the Ganges is in the most miserable state of neglect and disorder, the lands deserted and the cultivation so scanty as scarcely to supply subsistence to the remaining inhabitants, the roads infested with numerous bands of robbers, particularly in the neighbourhood of Delhi, where they are so formidable as to set the forces of the Government at defiance

"In this disgraceful and ruinous condition of the country and Government, a large army is employed in seeking its own subsistence by exacting unjust contributions from the defenceless Rajahs of Hindustan, instead of repressing the violences and depredations committed in their own territories and protecting their own subjects and revenue" [*PRC*, viii No 11]

But administrative disorder and vanished revenue were not the only drag on Lakhwā Dādā's activity During the months immediately following his coming to power, the thoughts of all Marātha leaders were absorbed by the problem of forcing the Nizām to fulfil his treaty obligations The decision of arms took place at Khardā on 11th March 1795, but before the terms of the treaty forced on the Nizām there were executed, came the catastrophe of the young

Peshwā's death (27th Oct), followed by an interregnum of 13 months when Mahārāshtra became a scene of hopeless intrigue and party strife, till the recognition of Bāji Rao II as Peshwā (5 Dec 1796) During this interval the Central power of the Marātha State was entirely paralysed and its recently humbled enemies recovered their old position No military help could be expected by the viceroy of Hindustan from his master in Punā, and therefore he could take no strong action

§ 3 *Threatened invasion by the Abdāli Shāh—its reaction on Indian politics*

At the same time the death of Mahādji Sindhia encouraged all the anti-Marātha elements in Northern India, and even the faithless Shah Alam to invite the Durrāni king Zamān Shāh to invade India and repeat his grandfather's feat by expelling the Marāthas and restoring Muslim domination in Hindustan Every winter that the Shah crossed the Khyber and came to Peshāwar, a thrill of fear passed through the Panjab, Delhi and Oudh In 1791 (January), 1795 (Nov), 1796 (Nov), 1797 (Oct), and 1798 (Oct) Zamān Shāh visited Peshāwar, and in 1797 and 1798 occupied Lāhor itself The report of his movements sent the rich fleeing from Lāhor Amritsar and even Delhi to safer places, and made the Marātha generals in the north "tremble like a cane branch under the wind" and cling helplessly to the English for armed support From our fuller knowledge of the facts we can now see that the Afghan menace was really not so great as the men of the time feared In fact, the Durrāni king's power was hopelessly weakened by his empty treasury and the incurable disputes in his family, while the Sikhs gradually set as a concrete wall guarding the land of the five rivers and young Ranjit Singh made himself master of Lāhor

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* Zamān Shāh left Lāhor on 4th January 1799 "This was the last Muslim invasion of India The Khālsa though disunited, had erected a wall of concrete against the north-western flood which had carried

Therefore, the Marātha generals in Hindustan remained on the defensive every winter from 1795 to 1798-99, and no ambitious or long-extending project could be undertaken by Lakhwā Dādā or his successor during these years The departure of De Boigne from India at the end of 1795 robbed the Marāthas of a strong and reliable defender, and henceforth they could only make pathetic appeals to the English for a defensive coalition But the British Indian authorities more accurately gauged the Durrāni power for offence and gave only a lukewarm response to the Marātha proposals

We shall now briefly narrate what Lakhwā Dādā could do during his viceroyalty In August 1795, he forced the fort of Sābalgarh, in the Karāuli State, south-east of the Chambal, to capitulate and then laid siege to Bijaypur (south of Sābalgarh) In October he stormed the *city* of Narwar from the Kachhwā Raja of Shivpuri, and next invested the *fort* which protected the city, but it held out till March next year In June 1796, we find Lakhwā attacking Datiā, the Bundelā Raja of which defied the Marathas for many years [*PRC* viii 24.]

But Lakhwā Dādā had not enjoyed his high office for full two years when a revolution in his master's Court in Punā overthrew him

§ 1 *Daulat Rao Sindhiā falls under the evil influence of Sharzā Rao Ghātgé, but Lakhwā is continued in office*

So judicious was Mahādji Sindhiā's planning and so highly competent were his chosen agents, that after his death his government was carried on for four years by its own momentum But the absence of a capable master was bound to make itself felt in the long run His heir, Daulat Rao was an immature lad of thirteen, dull of intellect, with-

everything before it during the past eight hundred years " Ranjit Singh gained Lāhor in July 1799 H Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, iii 120 "Cane branch" in *Hingné D* ii 42

out education, and so prone to self-indulgence that he soon became infected by the painful disease with which nature punishes promiscuous sensuality. To his lack of the power of choosing worthy servants, he added an obstinate persistence in one course and the truly oriental habit of letting matters drift without coming to any decision. For the first few years he was saved from the influence of wicked favourites by his reliance on the ladies of the house, Mahādji's widows—Bhāgīrathi Bāi, Yamunā Bāi, and Lakshmi Bāi (*neé* Kadam), and above all Kesari Bāi, a morganatic wife of the late Sindhiā remarkable for her intelligence and good sense. They constantly urged him to keep to the right path and conduct himself in a manner worthy of his ancestry.* It was only in 1798 when Daulat Rao discarded these well-wishers under the wicked advice of Sharzā Rao Ghātgé, that a breach began in his fortunes.

At Punā Daulat Rao Sindhiā was very hard pressed for money. His vast army and extravagant Court required a large flow of income. Mahādji had left him only a legacy of debt as the result of his glorious campaigns in the North. But not one pice of the five *krores* adjudged to be due to him from the Peshwā in the settlement of September 1793 had been paid. The war indemnity promised by the Nizām at Khardā could not be realised except by another invasion of his territory. Any tributes paid by the Rajput princes were eaten up by the army stationed in their country. Daulat Rao, therefore, had to find money if he was not to starve, or to be mobbed to death by his starving soldiery. His chosen minister Bāloba Tātyā had failed to provide the necessary funds during his two years of office. In this situation, Nana Fadnis, through his old follower Sharzā Rao Ghātge, secretly assured Daulat Rao that large sums could be easily collected if he only changed his ministers. The

* The Persian news-letters (Br. Mus. Or. 4608, 4609, Add. 24,036) give many instances of Daulat Rao taking counsel with these ladies and their urging him to give up low and frivolous amusements like kite-flying, jackal-hunting in the jungle outside Puna, &c., to which he had been lured by a licentious Muslim youth, the son of Shah Habib.

weakminded young prince swallowed the bait. On 26th October 1796, he suddenly arrested Bālobā Tātyā and Bhāu Bakhshi, who were Nānā's enemies, and recalled Abā Chitnis, a partisan of Nānā

Bālobā was Lakhwā's patron and constant supporter in Sindhiā's council The news of his fall reached Lakhwā's camp on 6th November, along with orders for his own arrest Lakhwā immediately sent his family for safety to Bithur in Oudh territory and himself marched to Gopālgarh (7th Nov), at first intending to go to Benares and take asylum in British territory He was too loyal to defy his master's authority, though the soldiers loved and clung to him.

But early next month (December) he received letters from Daulat Rao pressing him to resume his command The reason was that Zamān Shāh had in the meantime reached Peshāwar and was daily expected to march upon Lāhor and Delhi In the face of such a danger, an able and popular General like Lakhwā could not be antagonised without risking the loss of the Marātha dominions in North India to the Durrānis and the former Muslim dynasties. A number of Marātha sardārs in the North were ordered to go to Lakhwā Dādā in a deputation and conduct him from his asylum back to office But Lakhwā stood aloof and on his guard for some time, during which Jagu Bāpu exercised the supreme power in Hindustan.

Next year again, in October (1797) the report of Zamān Shah's march from Kābul towards India* thoroughly alarmed Daulat Rao, especially as the Rajput Rajas had now become restive and were actively planning to throw off the Marātha yoke, and expel Ambāji Inglé So, Daulat Rao (about 8th November) sent directions to General Perron and to each of the officers commanding the detached corps, directing them to consider themselves under the orders of Jagu Bāpu and Lakhwā Dādā. At the same time

* Zamān Shah's vanguard crossed the Indus at Attock on 19th Oct 1797, and occupied Lāhor on 3 Nov

he ordered these two supreme chiefs to assemble all their troops and march to Mewār and Jodhpur, leaving Khāndoji Inglé to continue the languid siege of Datiā

But the Durrāni menace, as usual, blew over, and in February next (1798) we find a reign of terror for extortion and personal vengeance let loose on Punā by Sharzā Rao Ghātgé, who was now supreme in Daulat Rao's Court by reason of the marriage of his daughter Baizā Bāi to that prince (on 25th February) At the instance of his evil genius, Sindhiā wrote to Lakhwā and Ambāji to attend him at Punā in person, really to squeeze out of them the millions they were supposed to have amassed during their viceroyalty in Hindustan Lakhwā evaded compliance on the plea that the current hostilities with the Sikhs and the Jaipur Raja did not permit him to leave his province

Next Lakhwā and Jagu Bāpu marched towards Bhopāl, where the Marāthas had been hired to assist in a disputed succession to the Nawābship They had reached Sāgar when they were cleverly arrested by Harji Sindhiā (c 10 March 1798), and the government of Hindustan was temporarily placed by Daulat Rao under Ambāji Ingle, who had promised a larger remittance of revenue from the northern viceroyalty Gopāl Bhāu was restored to Sindhiā's confidence, Nārāyan Bakhshi was thrown into prison, and the downfall of the Shenvi party seemed to be complete

§ 5 *Mahādji's widows begin war against Daulat Rao — Lakhwa Dada takes up their cause in North India (January 1799)*

In Punā the universal dissatisfaction with Daulat Rao's government drove his troops to mutiny for their pay and demand the removal of the new ministers But retribution was to descend on Sharzā Rāo and his infatuated master from another quarter On 15th May, 1798 Sharzā Rao personally ill-treated the widows of Mahādji Sindhiā who then raised the banner of revolt against Daulat Rao, after defeat

in a battle at Bhāmburdā (25th June), they escaped to the South Maratha country and gathered armed support there, while they issued an appeal to the army in North India to espouse their cause. Thus an even worse confusion than before fell on the Sindhian administration in the North and South alike, and its utter dissolution seemed imminent.

The widows on 17th June wrote to Harji Sindhiā, then holding Lakhwā and Jagu Bāpu in detention, appealing to him in the name of his late master Mahādji to release these two Generals, so that the latter might take up their cause and save them from oppression by depriving Daulat Rao of power. These letters caused a great ferment in the Marātha army of the North, where Lakhwā was very popular; many of the captains sided with the widows* and only a few remained true to Daulat Rao. In the end, Jagu Bāpu escaped from confinement by collusion with his keeper on 5th August, and Lakhwā Dādā was released three days later. They formally resumed their offices in the names of the widows on the 14th and 16th of that month respectively.

Against the rebels, an effective barrier was built by the coalition of Perron (De Boigne's successor as Sindhia's supreme commander of the New Model army) with Ambāji Inglé, whom Daulat Rao invested with the viceroyalty of the North. At first the partisans of the widows gained the city of Ujjain, Sindhia's capital, without striking a blow, c. 15 Sept. But three months later (c. 15 Dec. 1798), Ambāji's brother Bālā Rao Inglé recovered that capital, as Jagu Bāpu fled away from it at his approach.

* "The long arrears of pay due to the army and no prospect of a speedy relief from the present leading *sardārs*, together with a personal regard for the late commander, are beginning to work a disposition in the soldiers (of the *Jhari fauj*) to baffle the loyal endeavours of Harji Sindhia." "Distrust and dislike of (Daulat Rao) Sindhia so generally prevail among his subjects in Hindustan that he is now left with scarce one attached leader of distinction in either of his Marātha armies in his northern dominions." Resident to Governor-General, 3 Aug. and 14 Aug. 1798 (P. R. C. viii 74 & 75.)

The release of the two Generals was "effected by means of the commandants of three corps of infantry and of the artillery department." *Ibid.* 76.

The usual Durrānī threat in winter ended, for the last time, at the beginning of January 1799, and Lakhwā Dādā began his campaign in Mālwā to establish the Widows' government there

With his force swollen to about 20,000 men (mostly cavalry), Lakhwā Dādā began the war in the true Marātha style, moving rapidly over the districts of Mālwā and levying contributions from the towns and plundering the villages in Daulat Rao's dominions Bālā Rao Inglé was hopelessly outnumbered and outmatched, as he had only two infantry battalions and guns but no cavalry, he could only keep himself on the defensive, and run the risk of being starved In the Rāghogarh country two detachments sent by Ambāji, one under his brother Bālā Rāo and the other under his son Bhāu, were defeated and scattered by Jagu Bāpu (middle of January) Ambāji poured more troops into Mālwā to save the situation, but his forces were unprofitably dispersed, and his main army was involved in the siege of Datiā.

Bālā Rao then promised to Lakhwā to cease hostilities, evacuate Mālwā to his rival, and fall back on Gwalior (end of February) But Lakhwā knew the proposal to be a mere ruse for gaining time to let reinforcements reach him On 8th March, Lakhwā defeated and broke up the troops of Bāpu Sindhiā and Satvāji Patil who were advancing to join Bālā Rao When Lakhwā turned aside to attack Bālā Rao himself, the latter took up a strong position at Bārāpanti in a hilly terrain where his enemy's cavalry could not operate Thus all Mālwā lay open to Lakhwā's pillage In the third week of March he was forty *kos* north of Ujjain, and his light horsemen had been strengthened with "a good train of artillery" The defeated Bālā Rao Inglé fell back from Mālwā to Kotā, giving up his camp to pillage by the Grāsiās in the pay of Lakhwā, who next moved to Mandesor to levy contribution on that rich trade centre

§ 6 *Lakhwā Dādā's campaigns in Mewār, 1799*

But he was soon drawn to another field The Rānā of Udaipur, profiting by Daulat Rao's distress, made an attack upon those places in the Ajmer subah which he had been forced to cede to Mahādji Sindhiā's local agent Gulābji Kadam At the end of March, Lakhwā detached a force of three thousand to help the Rānā, who then renewed his attack and defeated Gulābji with great slaughter (*c* 5 April, 1799) On 9th April, Lakhwā Dādā himself entered Mewār with his whole force (from Mandesor) and attacked Hāmirgarh, to which Gulābji had fled for refuge after his disastrous defeat

Ambāji Inglé was at his wits' end how to keep hold of Mewār As soon as Lakhwā Dādā's rebellion became known to Daulat Rao that prince ordered the qiladārs of Agra, Aligarh and Delhi to deliver these forts to Perron, but those officers being Lakhwā's agents refused to obey, and Perron had to lay siege to each of these almost impregnable fortresses Perron therefore could spare no portion of De Boigne's famous brigades for the relief of Ambāji Inglé then hired George Thomas for half a lakh of rupees a month The Irish mercenary advanced from Kānud (*c* 15 April) towards Chitor The troops of Balā Rao and Bāpu Sindhiā, too, arrived from Mālwā towards Hāmirgarh and reached Chitor (*c* 20 April), while the besieged officers of Ambāji issued from their fort of refuge and joined Bālā Rao

Lakhwā's swarms of Deccan light horse enveloped the stationary camp of Bālā Rao and cut off its supply of grain, fire-wood and water, in several skirmishes during foraging also, his men were successful

Then the pendulum of Daulat Rao's mind swung in the opposite direction once more The Widows' War was only increasing his debt and distraction, and he must seek relief by a change of ministers About 11th April, he ordered Bālobā Tātyā to be brought out of confinement with the idea of making him his prime minister again and thus

facilitating the return of Lakhwā Dādā to his service and reconciliation with the royal Widows. The rise of Jaswant Rao Holkar and his resistless progress through Sindhia's Malwā territory, showed Daulat Rao how very weak in defence he now was. Lakhwā had become the ally of Jaswant in a common hostility to his former master.

The incredibly rapid success of the British arms in driving Tipu Sultān into his capital and there annihilating him (4th May 1799), coming after their enslavement of the Nizam eight months earlier, fell like a thunder-clap on the Indian princes that still remained independent. Henceforth the Peshwa and Sindhiā seemed to act like birds fascinated by the blazing eyes of a python and walking unresisting into its open jaws.*

Bālā Rao Ingle, who had made an armistice with Lakhwā Dādā on 10th May, held several interviews with him during that month for effecting a reconciliation. In the end, Bālā Rao marched towards Mālwā and Lakhwa Dādā from Chitor to Udaipur. Before the month was over, formal letters were received from Daulat Rao Sindhiā, appointing Lakhwā as his viceroy in Hindustan again. But Ambāji would not part with his viceroyalty over Mewār, by which he had amassed a fortune for eight years; he began to coerce the Mewār barons who had sided with Lakhwā in the late contest. His son, Bhāu Inglé, joined by George Thomas's disciplined corps reduced several baronial forts near Shāhpurā city. This move called up Lakhwā from Udaipur to the scene in support of his partisans. He called in his detachments and allies and by an attack seized six guns from Ambāji's diwān Nānā Ganesh. And yet peace parleys and skirmishes between the two sides went on together for many weeks.

On 15th July Lakhwā Dādā gained some degree of success in a sudden attack on Nānā Ganesh's troops. On 9th August, five thousand men from his army carried by

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* *PRC.* viii 159, 163

assault one of the batteries of Nānā Ganesh, killing and wounding eight hundred of his men, and capturing the commandants of the two defending battalions (Bunīād Singh and Bakhtāwar Singh) and five pieces of cannon with their munition carts and much baggage. George Thomas was separated from this battery by a flooded *nālā* and could give no support to the defence. After this disaster, the two agents of Ambāji retreated twenty miles.

Ambāji Inglé made frantic efforts to hire four battalions of Perron's infantry for service in Mewār, and even advanced four lakhs of rupees as subsidy. But nothing was done by the French general, and Ambāji himself was beleaguered by his long unpaid and mutinous soldiers of the *Jhari fauj*, (end of August).

Early in September, Lakhwā left Mewār and arrived near Kishangarh (64 miles south-west of Jaipur city) on the 18th. At this time letters were received from Daulat Rao appointing Lakhwā and Jagu Bāpu as his deputies in Hindustan and depriving Ambāji of authority over Mewār. About 15th October, Lakhwā raised the siege of Kishangarh, on being paid two lakhs by its Rajah. Mutual friends now brought about an interview between him and Perron at Muazzamābād (midway between Kishangarh and Jaipur) on the 27th of that month. A peaceful settlement was made between them on the following terms:—

1. Lakhwā Dādā is acknowledged by all parties to be Sindhīā's deputy in Hindustan and the detachment of Perron's army commanded by Sutherland (two battalions) is to remain under Lakhwā's orders.

2. Perron retains command of the forts of Delhi, Aligarh and Agra, until Daulat Rao's final decision of their possession be known.

3. Ambāji Inglé is to remain in undisputed possession of all his former districts (Gwalior, &c.) but relinquishes Mewār and every pargana taken from the party of the Widows. (*P.R.C.* viii. 185.)

Ambaji at last admitted defeat and terminated his engagement of George Thomas from 2nd November 1799

In the last week of this year, Lakhwā prevailed on Ambāji to make peace with the Rajah of Datiā on the following conditions —

The Rajah is to pay one lakh immediately to Ambāji's army, and to cede districts yielding a revenue of four lakhs of rupees Ambāji in return will raise the siege of Seondhā and withdraw from Datiā territory as soon as the above terms are fulfilled (*P R C* viii 198)

§ 7 *Lakhwā Dādā reappointed Sindhia's viceroy of the North, Nov 1799*

Lakhwā Dādā's second term of viceroyalty which began in November 1799, gave some months of peace and order to Sindhiā's North Indian dominions The Widows had been pacified by mutual friends and were now living at peace in Tuljāpur Jaswant Rao Holkar's mischievous activity had been arrested for a time by his loss of supporters "With the appointment of Bālobā Tātyā as the Diwān of Sindhiā, Lakhwā Dādā's position was strengthened and he ruled over Hindusthan with vigour, putting down disturbances and restoring peace by settling private quarrels" (*P R C* ix p viii)

During the first four months of 1800, Lakhwā carried on a most successful campaign in Rajputana With the help of Pohlmann's brigade of De Boigne's army, he besieged and reduced the strong fortress of Jahāzpur belonging to the baron of Shāhpurā in Mewār, his loss was two European officers and five hundred sepoys killed and wounded The Mahārānā paid him five lakhs out of the contribution due Lakhwā then entered Jaipur territory to extort the arrears of tribute Rajah Pratāp Singh of Jaipur had taken advantage of the Widows' War and the departure of De Boigne to stop the payment of his dues and to make preparations

for expelling the Marāthas. He persistently demanded the return of Tonk Rāmpurā, which had been ceded long ago to the Holkar family. About the 13th of March, Lakhwā took this fort from its Sikh collector Kripāl Singh and handed it over to Chevalier Dudrenec, the agent of Kāshi Rao Holkar. At this stage, Daulat Rao Sindhiā fearing that the death of Nānā Fadnis (at Punā on 12th March) would involve him in serious disputes with the Peshwā's new ministers, wrote to his officers in North India to refrain from all aggressions against his tributaries there. But they did not mind his letters; Ambāji renewed hostilities against the Rajah of Datiā and Lakhwā struck a decisive blow at the Jaipur army.

§ 8. *Battle of Mālpurā, 16 April 1800*

On 15th March the Jaipur Rajah had entered his tents at Sāngāner, while twelve days earlier the Rajah of Jodhpur had proclaimed war against the Marāthas and sent a cavalry corps to the assistance of Jaipur. General Perron, who was jealous of Lakhwā's authority, set out from Aligarh to interpose in the quarrel with Pratāp Singh, ostensibly as a mutual friend. Lakhwā's decision was quick. Hearing of the war preparations and advance of the Jaipur Rajah from his capital, he assembled his own troops and took post four miles south of Mālpurā, a town about 55 miles south-west of Jaipur. His army consisted of De Boigne's second brigade (of 6 battalions commanded by Pohlmann, a Hanoverian), Chevalier Dudrenec's brigade (of 6 battalions, supplied by Holkar), two battalions of Lakhwā's own contingent, a battalion furnished by the Kotā regent Zālim Singh, and a body of inefficient Marātha light horse, a total of about 16,000 men. The Jaipur army was formed by 18 battalions of musketeers, 1,000 Ruhelas, 2,000 Nāgā Gosāins, and upwards of 15,000 Rajput cavalry (including 5,000 Rāthor horsemen from Jodhpur led by Sawāi Singh),—a total of 27,000 men, besides 54 pieces of artillery, ranging from 24

pounders to six pounders. The Rajah of Jaipur commanded in person.

One arm of the Sohadiā river (a feeder of the Banas), after flowing southwards by the walls of the city of Mālpurā for three miles, meets, almost at right angles another arm which runs due west to east in a narrow but deep channel. South of this channel the Marātha army lay encamped near the village of Hindoli, their front to the river. The Jaipur army came up and encamped north of this channel, with the town of Mālpurā on their left rear.

Planning to surprise the Jaipur army, Lakhwā Dādā set his troops in motion at four o'clock early in the morning of 16th April. His army was drawn up in two lines, the first being formed by Pohlmann's brigade (Right) and Dudrenec's (Left), while the second, marching a thousand paces behind the first line, was composed of the Marātha cavalry (under Bāpu Sindhiā), these pushing forward some squadrons to the two sides of the first line to guard their flanks. The light field pieces of each brigade moved before it. The Rajput right was composed of the Rāthors and left of the Kachhwā troops.

The attempt at surprise failed, as the Jaipur troops got the alarm, through the recklessness of the advanced cavalry patrols of the Marathas before the infantry had forded the river. A heavy cannonade was opened from all their line. Major Pohlmann, on this, ordered the second brigade to advance with its guns, but to reserve its fire till it was close to the enemy. These orders were punctually obeyed and his artillery did great execution. Sweeping over the five

The detailed figures are taken from a letter written by an English officer of Pohlmann only four days after the battle, but they do not make up this writer's total of 65,000 men on the Jaipur side and half that number in the Marātha army. A battalion in the Indian princes' service in those days ranged from 400 to 500 men only,—the lower of these two figures being the known strength of Dudrenec's battalions. I have corrected the total in the light of this fact. The absurd exaggerations of James Skinner that the Jaipur army numbered 1 lakh and 10 thousand men with 150 guns and that the Marātha army lost 20,000 men in killed and wounded and the Rajput "probably double that number," have only to be stated to be rejected.

hundred yards of open space from the river bank to the line of Jaipur guns, Pohlmann's infantry took forty of the pieces, though at some sacrifice of their own men.

But the toughest part of the battle now began During this close engagement on the right, Dudrenec's brigade (the left of their front line) was charged by the Rāthor cavalry James Skinner, who fought in this battle in Pohlmann's wing, gives the following spirited description of the scene that ensued "The Rāthors were seen approaching from a distance, the tramp of their immense and compact body rising like thunder above the roar of battle They came on first at a slow hand gallop, which increased in speed as they approached the well-served guns of the brigade showered grape upon their dense mass, cutting down hundreds at each discharge, but this had no effect in arresting their progress;—on they came, like a whirlwind, trampling over fifteen hundred of their own body, destroyed by the cannon of the brigade, neither the murderous volleys from the muskets, nor the serried hedge of bayonets could check or shake them they poured, like a torrent, on and over the brigade, and rode it fairly down, leaving scarce a vestige of it remaining"

Holkar's infantry is described by a European general of the time (George Thomas) as 'illpaid, badly officered, and without subordination, indisciplined, nor can they make use of their arms" Besides, this was a new brigade recently raised by Dudrenec and not yet sufficiently trained The result was that the left wing of the Deccan army was crumpled up in one short onset, 320 men being slain or wounded out of a total strength of about 2,100 "Captain Parsh and several other officers were killed, and Dudrenec only escaped by throwing himself down amongst the dead"

The victorious Rāthors, never looking behind them or thinking of their Kachhwā comrades, swept onward in the excitement of success, and crossed the thousand paces interval up to the second line in a twinkle Here the Marātha cavaliers did not wait to meet the shock, but "ran away like

sheep," the Rāthors pursuing them for two miles to the rear (Skinner)

This gallant but reckless charge, exactly like that of Prince Rupert's cavalry during the Civil War in England had a disastrous effect on their side. Pohlmann's brigade after defeating the van of the Jaipur army, was surprised to see its own left totally uncovered by the destruction of Dudrenec's wing and its rear exposed by the flight of the cavalry behind it.* This was the crisis of the battle. But Pohlmann's skill and coolness and the discipline of his sepoys saved the day for him. He formed his six battalions into a square, the bristling line of bayonets and file-firing from the four faces of which prevented the enemy's cavalry from breaking in, though the Kachhwās made onset after onset upon them. The Rajput Centre had now come into the firing line, with their Rajah on a huge *ambāri* elephant, at the head of [illegible]000 choice horse.

Pohlmann's dense column, "by an incessant and well directed fire of the artillery, finally succeeded in coming to close action with the enemy, of whom great numbers immediately gave way, the main body however kept their ground for an hour and a half longer, during which the action is said to have been very severe on both sides." (English letter of 29 April.)

Sawai Pratāp Singh retired to Jaipur, with his army, but all his camp and baggage and guns were captured. Pohlmann's brigade had 75 casualties and Dudrenec's 320, but these were only the first rough estimates. (*Asiatic Annual Register* for 1800, Sup to Chronicle, pp 127-128)

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* Col Collins reported to the Governor General from Fatehgarh, on 21st April, 1800 "Previous to the total defeat of the Rajput army, and whilst a probability of restoring the battle still remained, Pratāp Singh formed the resolution of making a vigorous charge on Mr Pohlmann's brigade with a thousand select cavalry, but he was dissuaded from carrying this spirited design into execution by his Diwān Rāi Chand." Lakhwā in a letter to Collins put his own loss at 700 men and that of the enemy at "probably above 2000" (*P R C* ix pp 10-11). I disbelieve Skinner, who told the story of the fighting to his friend and biographer, J B Fraser 35 years after the event. (*Military Memoirs of Lt Col James Skinner*, i 149.)

§ 9 *Lakhwā Dādā dismissed—the Widows' War renewed, May 1800*

Lakhwā Dādā had gained for Sindhiā a splendid victory rivalling that of Mertā ten years earlier, and his reward was —dismissal On 25th April when the news of this glorious achievement reached Daulat Rao's camp near Punā, a darbār was held to celebrate it, at which the prime minister Bālobā Tātyā was treacherously arrested This was the contrivance of Sharzā Rao Ghātgé, who had been released from confinement in January and had now won Daulat Rao over by promising him 25 lakhs of rupees to be advanced by himself with Ambāji Inglé and Abā Chitnis (*P R C* vi No 339) Orders were also issued for the arrest of Lakhwā

On hearing of this revolution in their master's court, Lakhwā, Jagu and several sardārs of their party quitted the Marātha camp in Jaipur suddenly on the morning of 5th May 1800 and fled away towards Ajmere and Mewār Ambāji Inglé was reappointed Sindhiā's viceroy in Hindustan and directed to act in concert with Perron and prevent Lakhwā from joining the Widows Lakhwā entered into an agreement with Bhim Singh the Rajah of Marwār to defend him against any attack by Perron, and sent his family and effects to Jodhpur for safety He himself stayed near Udaipur till the middle of July, for obtaining money

Perron reaped where Lakhwā Dādā had sown After Lakhwā's flight, Perron arrived near Jaipur, and about 10th May made a settlement with the Jaipur Government The Rajah agreed to pay to Sindhiā nine lakhs of rupees—namely, six lakhs within one month and three lakhs after six months In return the Marātha troops were to vacate Jaipur territory Perron also promised to restore Tonk-Rāmpurā to their original owner the Rajah of Jaipur, but this led to a breach with Holkar to whom that tract belonged by right, and at last in July, Perron was forced by circumstances to conciliate Holkar's agent Dudrenec by relinquishing Tonk-Rāmpurā to him

When Lakhwā Dādā made his pact with Rajah Bhim Singh, Perron marched towards Jodhpur (end of May) to coerce the Rajah, but he was compelled in a fortnight to return without doing anything as his presence was required to quell Shambhu-nath, the diwān of Imām Bakhsh, a partisan of Lakhwā, who had risen in Saharanpur in concert with a horde of Ruhelā robbers from Rohilkhand.

The Widows after a long stay at Burhānpur, had to flee northwards to escape the trained battalions sent against them by Daulat Rao from Punā. They arrived near Maheshwar on the Narmadā about the 1st of August. From here they sent an appeal for money aid and alliance to Jaswant Rao Holkar, who was up opposing Daulat Rao Sindhia for recovering his family possessions. Jaswant advanced two lakhs of rupees to them and conducted them in all honour to Ujjain at the end of September.

Meantime, Lakhwā Dādā who had been living on the plunder of Jaipur territory moved from the Ajmer frontier to Sambhar (c. 10 August), and at the end of September detached two thousand horse from his corps under Jagu Bāpu to join the Bāis in Mālwā. But the situation steadily turned against him; the Bāis could not raise funds in Ujjain, Jaswant Holkar threatened to desert their cause unless he was paid four lakhs for his expenses; three regular battalions of Sindhia from the Deccan crossed the Narmadā and moved upon Ujjain with none to oppose them, and in Rajputana, Perron's lieutenant Louis Bourquien captured the city of Ajmer and invested its famous fortress. So, in October, Lakhwā hastened to Udaipur, and after extracting two lakhs from the Mahārānā, set off on the 16th to join Jagu Bapu in Mālwā with the remnant of his army. The Widows' War now ended in Rajputana and was transferred to Mālwā. Its course there can be understood only by following the history of Jaswant Rao Holkar with which it was inextricably mixed. Here it is necessary to begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER XLIV

JASWANT RAO HOLKAR IN THE NORTH, 1798-1801

§ 1 *The rise of Jaswant Rao Holkar, early adventures (1798)*

For four days after the defeat and death of his beloved brother and leader Malhār II (Ch 42 § 7), the forlorn Jaswant Holkar hid himself in Punā, and then on 19th September 1797 issued from that city to seek refuge at the Court of Raghuji Bhonslé of Nāgpur, who had promised his father Tukoji Holkar to befriend him On the way he took a loan from a Gosāin (monk) and raised a force of two hundred retainers He was well received at Nāgpur (*c* 25 Nov), but took to a roving life of plunder in the surrounding country for a living In a few months Daulat Rao Sindhia learnt of his growing strength and lawless activity and wrote to Raghuji Bhonslé to arrest the young rebel This was effected on 20th February 1798 But on his way to Nāgpur Jaswant had secured a very able and devoted adherent in Bhawāni Shankar (the son of Rāi Brijlal of Delhi, now settled in Bhopāl) who was out in search of employment To this follower we owe a full account of Jaswant's early career, based on intimate personal knowledge, which Bhawāni Shankar dictated and Mohan Singh wrote down in his own Persian *

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* This Persian book has been miscalled by the Marātha writers as *Bhawani Shankar's Diary* It is not a diary, and is admittedly the composition of Mohan Singh from facts narrated by Bhawāni Shankar, and at the very end (after Bhawāni Shankar's flight from Jaswant's camp in April 1805) based on the author's personal inquiries Bhawani Shankar could not hold a pen as the fingers of both his hands had been destroyed by wounds received in fighting for Holkar—by a bayonet thrust in a fight with two battalions of Dudrenec in December 1798, according to Mohan S (f 66*b* of ms) or "by a gun shot in a former action with the English" according to Capt J Pester, (*War and Sport* 408) A much later work, the *Holkar Family Kaifiyat* (written after 1826) in Marathi, gives a different account, which I cannot prefer to the contemporary Bhawāni Shankar's Best account in *PRC* vi 25-26 (in Puna), 48, 86-90 (confined)

Thenceforth Bhawāni Shankar acted as Jaswant Rao's guardian, prime minister, diplomatic agent, and lieutenant in campaigns When Daulat Rao Sindhia and Kāshi Rao Holkar sent a detachment to take delivery of the prisoner from the hands of the Nāgpur Rajah, Bhawāni Shankar contrived the young prince's escape from his guards, in disguise, on 9th April 1798, just before the arrival of his enemies After many hair-breadth escapes and romantic adventures, the fugitive prince made his way to the Bhil country of East Khandesh, in the wooded plateau of Akrāni,* whose lord was a Rajput baron named Rajah Bhāu Singh

In Central India the field was now clear for a brigand leader of boundless ambition and enterprise The long autocratic rule of Ahalyā Bāi Holkar had ended with her death in August 1795, without her having trained a competent successor Then had followed the lingering illness and death of Tukoji Holkar in Punā in August 1797 and the subservience of his eldest son the weakling Kāshi Rao Holkar to Daulat Rao Sindhia and Daulat Rao's policy of reducing the House of Holkar to vassalage under himself All these evils had combined to dissolve the administration of the Holkar dominions in Mālwa and Khāndesh The still untamed local chieftains and wild jungle tribes and countless roving bands of armed robbers again raised their heads without fear Every old servant of the House of Holkar considered it a loyal duty to refuse obedience and tribute to the imbecile Kāshi Rao Holkar or to his master the hated Sindhia

Thus the report that a brave and active son of Tukoji

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* Bhau Singh, the Rājput rānā of Maltwāi, annexed the Akrani pargana in the Satpurā range (in the eastern corner of the East Khāndesh district) and built the fort of Roshmal His vassal was Jhunjhar Nāyak, the Bhil chieftain of Kherlī (spelt as *Cherla* in the Persian ms) The *Bombay Gaz* I pt ii, 633, adds that "Bhikāji the son of Bhāu S murdered Jangar, the Bhil Nāyak of Chikli, below the hills, and in revenge Jangar's son Devji killed Bhikāji", after which the Peshwā occupied the country in 1816 Is *Jangar* a mistake for *Junjar*? There is a village named *Cherlā* in the Bastar State, Chanda dist , C P

had openly risen against Kāshi Rao, drew to Jaswant's side all the loyal as well as selfish servants of his father's kingdom. All the country's mercenary soldiers and ambitious adventurers were lured to his banners by the prospect of plunder under such a famous leader.

The classic land of Mālwa had once been the fountain-head of Hindu culture. On her soil had been born the models of Sanskrit poetry and drama, science and the fine arts, dance and song, which still survive to enrich our national life. In the middle ages, romance and handicrafts had kept up the traditional fame of this province. But in the year 1798 the dark cloud of anarchy, rapine and popular suffering descended on the unhappy land. The peasant and the artisan lost the fruits of their labour and perished from brigandage or famine. The desolation of fields, the degradation of the women to servile concubinage, and the ruin of trade and industry, turned the most fruitful part of Aryāvarta into a wilderness, tenanted only by two-legged tigers and their servile jackals and unresisting human prey. This anarchy did not end with the crushing of the Pindharis by the British in the war of 1817, but continued to smoulder till the suppression of the Mutiny of 1858 and the dawning of the modern age. For Mālwa's misery, the responsibility lies primarily on Jaswant Holkar's unpatriotic ambition and in a lesser degree on Daulat Rao's insane desire to extinguish the power of the House of Holkar, without having the capacity to replace it by an orderly and efficient government of his own.

Jaswant at first declared that he was merely looting Kāshi Rao Holkar's villages in order to force that Holkar chief to grant him an estate legitimately due for his maintenance as a younger son of the late chieftain, (as the British Resident reported in July 1798). But his plans expanded with the growth of his strength. His appeal succeeded because he appeared as the saviour of the power and dignity of Holkar from the base surrender made by Kāshi Rao Holkar to their hereditary rival. His personal

ambition was somewhat sublimated by his real affection for Khandé Rao II (the infant son of Malhār Rao II), and he began to press the Peshwā, as the common master of the Marātha chiefs, to declare this infant as the lawful head of the House of Holkar with Jaswant himself as his regent and the working head of the State

Jaswant throve on plunder Robber tribes of the jungle, Grāsiās and Pindharis joined him, and above all bands of Afghan mercenary soldiers thrown out of employment elsewhere The most notable of the Pathan condottieri was Mir Khan (finally exalted by the British as Amir Khan, Nawab of Tonk), the ablest, the most ruthless, and the most unprincipled captain of mercenaries who have ever lacerated the heart of India The character of Jaswant Rao Holkar cannot be estimated correctly if we forget the fact that he made this Amir Khan his closest instrument and sworn brother

In Khāndesh Jaswant's first supporters were the Bhil chieftains, Jhunjhar Nāyak of Kherlā and Govardhan Nāyak of Mekhlā, and then Rajput overlord Bhāu Singh of Akrāni They brought to his standards 600 mercenary Arabs and Sindhis as well as some thousands of Bhill bowmen Thus strengthened, he plundered Kāshi Rao Holkar's villages in that region, so successfully that within three months of his breaking prison at Nagpur, his activities came to be noticed by the British Resident at Fathgarh *

Soon afterwards he was hired by Anand Rao Pawār the Rajah of Dhār in his war with the usurping minister of his deceased father The rebel was ejected, but the Pawār defaulted in the payment of his promised subsidy Being now planted in Mālwa, north of the Narmadā, Jaswant plundered Dipālpur and many other rich parganas of Sindhia Success bred success As Bhawāni Shankar narrates, "The report of Jaswant Rao's liberality having spread far and near, flocks of people from all sides began

* Letter to Governor General, 3 Aug 1798 *P R C* viii No 74 Thakur, ii 11 (Bhil), 13 (Dipalpur), 16 (Mir Kh Feb 1799)

to come and taste his bounty Nawab Mir Khan, from the district of Bhopāl, sent to Bhawāni Shankar a letter begging to be taken into Jaswant Rao's service" Rs 5,000 was sent to him to equip his force, and he joined Holkar's camp at Shujāwalpur Jaswant's army was now raised to 2,000 horse and 5,000 foot In need of money, he marched back to the Narmadā, looting the places on the way

After the Dhār adventure, in order to avoid Kāshi Rao Holkar's regular forces (under Chevalier Dudrenec) lying in the immediate south at Indore, Jaswant made a rapid detour far to the east, raiding Nimāwar, Hāndiā city (where he recrossed the Narmadā), and Bhikangāon, (25 miles e of Khargon)

Then he prepared to meet two battalions of Dudrenec's corps, who had advanced to the south of the Narmadā to hunt him down He moved from Bhikangāon to Kasrāod, and sent his camp and baggage for safety to the difficult hilly country behind that village The two battalions, one Telinga and one Najib, with only four guns, were heavily outnumbered, but fought bravely and were defeated and dispersed, leaving their guns and baggage behind, (end of December, 1798)

§ 2 *Jaswant Holkar crowns himself, January, 1799*

Strong in men and money, undefeated in battle, Jaswant now turned to win his patrimony After this victory he wrote to the Holkar Government's officers in Maheshwar (Ahalyā Bai's capital) to come and wait on him, if they desired their own good Dudrenec, after learning of the defeat of his battalions, left Maheshwar and fell back on Indore All the other officers came and offered their submission to Jaswant.

Jaswant next marched to Maheshwar and there ascended the family throne (beginning of January 1799). All the usual gifts, appointments and rejoicings of a royal coronation now took place During the halt at this capital, his forces were raised to nearly 8,000 horse and 15,000 foot,

Dudrenec completed his war preparations at Indore and then, at the beginning of March 1799, advanced with six battalions and a large body of cavalry to Chauli, six miles north-east of Maheshwar In the battle that followed Jaswant's cavalry was mown down by the grape shot of the Frenchman's well served artillery, and his infantry (with Gosāin monks) were driven out of their trenches with slaughter by Plumet, the lieutenant and son-in-law of Dudrenec Jaswant personally fought well, but had to leave a field deserted by his men, and fell back on Maheshwar This was his first defeat and a signal disaster It was immediately followed by the flight of most of his troops and allies to Dharampuri, a village on the Narmada 15 miles west of Maheshwar To this place Jaswant himself, with Mir Khan Bhawāni Shankar and other faithful followers, retired after taking away as much of Ahalyā Bāi's jewels and treasures from her capital as he could transport

Dudrenec, after his victory, moved on to Maheshwar, and seized as much of the State treasure and costly articles as he could lay hands on, and levied contributions on Jaswant's supporters in the city Next Jaswant, who had removed from Dharampuri to Durjanpur, sent a detachment which successfully plundered the small portion of Dudrenec's camp and baggage left behind in Indore He rapidly increased his army by new enlistment, and set up his own outposts at Jām-ghāt and Samrur-ghāt, the two passes in the road from Maheshwar to Indore, and thus cut off Dudrenec's supplies After a month, the Frenchman yielded, and made peace by abandoning Kāshi Rao and acknowledging Jaswant Rao as the lawful head of the Holkar State (April 1799) Freed from all enemies at home, Jaswant Rao now set himself to taking possession of the Holkar territories in Rajputana and Mālwa and raiding Sindhia's dominions With the internal history of his State we are not concerned, and therefore we shall turn to his share in the Widows' war against Daulat Rao Sindhia, which had now moved from the Deccan to Mālwa

Lakhwā Dādā who had become the leader of the Widows' party in North India, solicited Jaswant's alliance as early as April 1799, and incited him to attack Daulat Rao's capital Ujjain, which was then poorly guarded. The Holkar prince invested the city, pressing its rich inhabitants to pay him tribute (May), but Lakhwā soon afterwards persuaded him to retire from Sindhia's possessions in Mālwa and to give up his demands on the citizens of Ujjain. In June, Bālā Rao Inglé was engaged with his corps by Jaswant on a pay of 1¼ lakhs of rupees a month. Jaswant next turned to levy contribution from Kotā and committed great ravages in the territory of that Hādā State (July) on the Rajah's refusal to pay blackmail. At the end of August he vacated that country on getting two lakhs. (*PRC* viii Nos. 141-166.)

William Gardner, a Scotsman of noble blood, who had left the King's service in India and gone to Haidarabad now entered Jaswant's service and was sent to Indore to raise a brigade. But when only one battalion and a half had been raised he was ordered to go to Maheshwar and aid its collector in resisting the troops of Daulat Rao who were infesting Khāndesh. In a battle that followed, on 16th December 1799, the raw sepoys of Gardner were overwhelmed by superior numbers and efficiency and dispersed with the loss of four guns, Gardner himself being taken prisoner. (*PRC* viii 200. Mohan S. 76*a*.)

Lakhwā Dādā, now again reconciled to Daulat Rao, was operating in Mewār, where Dudrenec had been employed by Jaswant Rao Holkar for some time past in trying to recover possession of the old Holkar *jāgir* of Parānā, Tonk and Rāmpura, of which the last two, held by Kripāl Singh Sikh, a follower of Kāshi Rao, refused him obedience. But Lakhwā captured Rāmpurā (13th March 1800) and handed it over to Dudrenec. The brigade under Dudrenec co-operated with Lakhwā in the battle of Mālpurā (16th April), but the Chevalier immediately afterwards left his side in anger at not being given half the Jaipur guns captured in that battle, though the Holkar troops had been

ridden down by the Rajputs and only saved by Sindhia's brigade under Pohlmann on that day.

Only 19 days after this victory, Lakhwā Dādā was compelled to flee from Daulat Rao's army and rise in rebellion again, owing to news of his ungrateful master's treacherous blows at his Shenvi officers including himself and Jagu Bāpu. (5 May 1800) The Widows' War broke out afresh and next month these ladies proceeded to Ujjain to set up a rival Government in the North For their defence Lakhwā Dādā was recalled to Mālwa from Rajputana (early November 1800)

We shall now turn to the civil war which was thus transferred to Mālwa and which redoubled the sufferings of that unhappy province from Jaswant's predatory activity

§ 3 *The Widows' War enters Malwa, 1800 Jaswant Holkar joins them*

The first family war against Daulat Rao Sindhia had been closed in August 1799, by his assuring the widows of Mahādji of the means of their defence and maintenance, and promising never to employ their brutal persecutor Sharzā Rao Ghātgé in his service again But on 4th January 1800 he released Sharzā from prison and brought him to his Court. The first use that this favourite made of his liberty was to send hired assassins into the house of the widows at night (on the 11th of that month) One of these ladies, Yamunā Bāi was stabbed but the alarm raised saved her from death, and a captured culprit confessed to the plot The diwān Bālobā Tātya who had pledged his word on behalf of his master to induce the widows to make peace, now felt publicly disgraced by his master's breach of faith and offered to resign, but he was entreated to remain in office However, all pretence ended when on 25th April, Daulat Rao treacherously arrested Bālobā and his associates

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* Of the three widows of Mahādji, one Bhāgirathi Bāi had died on 15 Aug 1799, Lakshmi Bāi survived till (at least) 1806, and Yamunā Bāi died on 1 Feb 1811

and gave unfettered power to Sharzā Rao. The result was the flight of Lakhwā Dada from the Sindhian camp in Hindustan in anticipation of the order for his arrest and the departure of the now friendless Bāis from Jāmgāon to North India to seek protection with him (May 1800). The civil war broke out once more.

Early in June the two Widows reached Burhānpur and begged Jaswant Holkar to help them in gaining possession of their family capital Ujjain, which was then under his control. At the same time Daulat Rao Sindhia wrote to him to prevent them from entering Mālwa. They were thus halted near Burhānpur for several weeks. But as General Perron decided to restore Holkar's jāgir of Tonk-Rāmpurā to its original owner the Rajah of Jaipur, Jaswant Holkar was antagonised by this loss of his father's property. He therefore invited the Widows to Maheshwar.* Here they arrived at the beginning of August and were welcomed by him with a loan of one lakh of Rupees in cash and another lakh in clothing and materials. A pact was made between them. Jaswant was to help them with his army in gaining possession of Mahādji's northern dominions and they were to pay him four lakhs of Rupees for his army expenses. Escorted by Jaswant they reached Ujjain (about 1 October). Here their difficulties began. Their need was money, and they could raise no loan or donation, though they were personally popular out of regard for Mahādji's memory. Jaswant soon lost patience and threatened to leave their party unless the promised four lakhs and twenty guns from the Ujjain arsenal were delivered to him. Just then he received through Ambāji Inglé a seductive offer of five lakhs if he turned against the Widows.

Jaswant Holkar had called up one of his trained battalions under Captain Plumet and made it take post near the Widows' residence. Here on the 1st of November Plumet

* Their flight from Burhānpur was hastened by the news that Daulat Rao had sent some of his battalions from Punā to overtake and capture the Bāis.

attacked their camp by surprise at night and robbed all their property, the two ladies escaping with their bare lives. Public execration fell on Jaswant for this act of treachery and lack of chivalry (Rājādhyaksha, letter No 299, Mohan 5.)

The city of Ujjain now felt the heavy hand of the spoliator Jaswant greatly oppressed the citizens to get money, the floors of richmen's houses were dug up in search of buried hoards, guns and military stores were removed from the state arsenal to Holkar's camp

In the meantime, at the call of the Widows, Lakhwa Dada had detached Jagu Bāpu from Rajputana (about 3 October) with 2,000 horse to hasten to their side He himself left Udaipur (on [illegible]th October) and joined Jagu Bapu's camp at Jaora, where he found the Bāis arrived The force under him was only 1,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry

Jaswant Holkar now openly declared himself on the side of Daulat Rao, though he did not for that reason cease to raid and desolate the Sindhian dominions On 16th November, five battalions of sepoys detached by Daulat Rao arrived at Ujjain Jaswant had left the city a day earlier, to oppose Lakhwā Dādā who had advanced from Jāorā to Pilodā

§ 4 *Lakhwā Dāda's fights for the Sindhian Widows*

Lakhwā found himself clearly outnumbered by the forces of Daulat Rao, especially the trained battalions, and he wisely took to the Deccani tactics of making rapid movements and surprise attacks, skirmishing and avoiding close engagements and sieges Of this art he was a passed master Leaving the neighbourhood of Ujjain he marched away to the Rāghugarh district to join his ally Durjan Sal Khechi On the way thither near Shahjahanpur he fell in with Mir Khan's brother, who was escorting Mir Khan's camp and baggage By a sudden night attack (on 27th November) Lakhwā routed these forces (4,000 horse and foot) killing and wounding 200 of them and taking 300 Ruhelas pri-

sunset. The fugitives fled to Purānā, abandoning to the victors all their camp, eleven pieces of artillery, some elephants, many camels and 300 horses. Three days later, Durjan Sal Khechi defeated Bālā Rao Inglé and obliged him to flee to the fort of Aaun. (*PRC* ix No 26. Mohan S. differs.) Jaswant Holkar had given up the side of the Widows but there could be no real alliance between him and Sindhia. The Peshwā under pressure from Daulat Rao invested Kāshi Rao with the robes of the head of the Holkar state, and thus shut out Jaswant's darling, the orphan son of Malhar II (c. 10 December 1800). Embittered by this disappointment, Jaswant suspended hostilities with Lakhwā Dādā, who then very wisely secured Jaswant's neutrality by restoring the district of Shahjahanpur to Mir Khan and marching towards Rājgarh (in the Khechi country), where he arrived about 19th December. Here joining his ally Durjan Sal Khechi (the founder of the Khilchipur dynasty) he moved on to Bundelkhand, planning to leave the Widows under the protection of the Rajah of Datiā (Satrajit Bundela) and with his help roam about levying contributions from the *jāgirs* of Daulat Rao's partisans. On the way, they overtook the forces of Bāla Rao Inglé on 28th December 1800, and after a bloody fight forced him to flee to the neighbouring fortress of Pichor, which Lakhwā invested.[1]

All this time Ambāji Inglé was playing an ambiguous but inactive part. He made no haste to join Jaswant Holkar for a joint attack on Lakhwā, while he was still in Mālwa, but sought only to further his personal interests, trying to wrest Jāwad in Mewār (c. 20 Nov.), then he lay inactive at Sitāmau for sometime (Dec. 1-14), and finally joined Jaswant Holkar near Sārangpur (c. 20 Dec.) but could do nothing for his master. The two allies suspected each other of treachery, and their wrangling over the delay in pay-

[1] "Bālā Rao escaped from Pichor by his usual device of treachery. He deceived Lakhwā by means of a fictitious treaty, in which he agreed to surrender the important fort of Narwar, which belonged to his brother Ambāji, and gave hostages." *P R C* ix 242.

ing Jaswant his promised subsidy[*] grew daily bitterer. Ambaji's own army was 11,000 strong, and though Jaswant had sent to him 9,000 men, these were withdrawn at the end of January 1801, so that Ambāji gave up the idea of fighting Lakhwā but went instead to Kotā, which city he left on 2nd February to join his brother at the siege of Narwar. In the meantime, the Rajah of Datiā had joined Lakhwā's force with 3,000 infantry, 2,000 horse and 6 guns, on 29th January and welcomed the Widows.

Jaswant Holkar had, no doubt, retired from the civil war in the Sindhian family, but Daulat Rao now concentrated overwhelming force against Lakhwā and the Bāis. He himself reached Burhānpur (on his way back from Puna) on 15th February and compelled Ambāji, by the threat of dismissal, to move against Lakhwā from the west. General Perron sent a detachment which took post at Dholpur to defeat any attempt of Lakhwā to break through to the north and enter the Agra district which he had long ruled. The portion of De Boigne's army which had accompanied Daulat Rao to the Deccan, under high European officers, was now pushed up across the Narmadā to close the southern road to the rebels. On 3rd April, General Perron himself started from Aligarh to reinforce Ambāji and strike directly at Lakhwā and his allies.

§ 5. *Battle of Seondha. Death of Lakhwā Dada*

The champion of Mahādji's Widows felt his cause hopeless, as he was without money, and heavily outnumbered. His unpaid soldiery began to desert him. The net was closed round him on the north, west and south, and the hunters were coming up very close. But he would not surrender; he fought skirmishes with Ambāji's men in March, and at last fell back to Seondha, forty miles due east

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[*] Bhawāni Shankar says that Ambāji actually paid Jaswant five lakhs (*f* 87*a*). The British Resident records the report that Jaswant was angrily demanding from Daulat Rao ten lakhs as compensation for the losses caused to Holkar's dominions by the depredations of the Widows' partisans (*P R C* ix 239)

of Gwalior, in the only direction still open to him. In the fort of this place he lodged the Widows for safety, while he himself encamped under the walls of the town, with 10,000 cavalry, 5,000 infantry, and 32 guns, determined to fight General Perron who arrived within 20 miles of him on 22nd April, 1801

At Seondha* was fought the last battle of the ablest and noblest of Mahādji's generals now surviving It was a hopeless contest, but Lakhwā stood his ground manfully against odds which would have disheartened any other man On 3rd May 1801, Perron attacked and after a sharp and murderous conflict, carried a redoubt of the rebels, capturing five guns there He immediately followed up this victory by storming a second redoubt The Datiā Rajah was mortally wounded, Lakhwa himself was wounded in the hand by grape shot and the wound festered till his death nine months later The Grāsia allies deserted the lost cause, and the Bāis, with the invalid Lakhwā Dādā and their surviving *sardārs*, fled away by the Chandāveli pass to Datiā (arriving there on 9th May) That capital could not long harbour them Their unpaid soldiery went away in search of bread

But the war was not pushed to a bloody end by the victors Perron had to leave for Northern India immediately after his victory, in order to settle scores with the Sikhs and George Thomas Ambāji arrived near Datiā (*c* 20 May), but had to give up all designs against that town; he set on foot negotiations for reconciling the Bāis to Daulat Rao, and himself started (*c* 2 June) for Narwar, *en route* to Mewār The details of these negotiations can be read in *P R C* ix 255 and 10 † The Widows' War now ended by being engulfed in a colossal contest between

* Seondha—*P R C* ix 219-254 Fraser's *Skinner*, i 185-187 Gulgule D, letter of 22nd May 1801

† On 19 Feb 1802, Resident Collins reported "Ambāji Inglé has consented, on the part of D R Sindhia, to give the Bāis possession of Āntri, a hill fort in the vicinity of Gwalior and parganas yielding an annual revenue of two lakhs" [C's letters of 5 Oct 1801 and 19 Feb 1802 not printed in *PRC*, ix]

Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar, whose final result was the loss of Maratha independence

This is a fit place for concluding the mournful story of Lakhwā Dādā's last days. At the end of September 1801, he was reported as levying soldiers on the strength of some money supplied by Jaswant Bhāu Karkar and other supporters of the Bāis, and trying to secure allies (Resident Collins to G G, 5 Oct) But he could effect nothing with his small means, and festering wound The dying warrior was offered an asylum by the Mahārānā of Udaipur After passing some time at Jāwad he took shelter in Sālumbar, and here a four days' fever put an end to his earthly sorrows and sufferings, on 7th Feb 1802 (Rajādhyaksha's *Lakwa Dada*, p 264 and letter No 329)*

§ 6 *Daulat Rao Sindhia ruins Malwa by his wrong policy and dilatoriness*

When on 3rd May 1801, Lakhwā Dādā and Mahādji's widows were driven out of Seondhā, the civil war in Daulat Rao's family ended, but within two months of that date another war burst upon him which was destined to shatter his power and destroy Maratha hegemony Jaswant Rao Holkar after withdrawing from Ujjain on 15th November 1800 had taken to plundering Sindhia's possessions north of that city, especially Bhansodā and the Mandesor district, in reprisal for the exactions of Daulat Rao's troops from the Holkar villages in Malwa and Khandesh Daulat Rao had opened negotiations with him for a compromise, but as Jaswant demanded the handing over to him of Khandé Rao (the heir of Malhar Holkar II) and the freeing of every village ever held by the Holkar family from Sindhia's control, peace between them proved unattainable Jaswant then swiftly turned to show what he was capable of doing

* James Skinner, from personal service under Lakhwā speaks highly of him as "the best Maratha general of his time", and again, "Lakhwa Dada was, by Daulat Rao's orders, proclaimed commander-in-chief, a measure which pleased all the troops, both Marathas and Europeans, for they all knew him to be an able, generous, and excellent soldier" [Fraser, i 124 and 131]

What was the head of the Sindhian State doing all this time? His dream of controlling the Puna Government as Regent of a puppet Peshwa had now vanished, and so also had all his hopes of ever realising any portion of the five krores promised to Mahādji in 1793 and the 17 lakhs promised to himself by Baji Rao in 1796 and 1798. And yet he would not leave Puna to save his northern dominions from which the most alarming reports of plunder and piteous appeals for armed protection were reaching him. The evil of the master's imbecility could not be corrected because of his capricious change of ministers and refusal to trust even the ablest minister with full power. The natural effect of Daulat Rao's rule was the unspeakable suffering of his subjects and the ruin of the political edifice which Mahādji had raised.

Leaving Puna finally on 5th December 1800, after repeated delays due to his hesitating policy and the chronic mutiny of his long unpaid soldiery, Daulat Rao Sindhia reached his ancestral village of Jāmgāon (64 miles north-east of Puna) on the 23rd of that month. After a four weeks' halt here, he resumed his march on 19th January 1801 and reached Burhānpur on the Tāpti on 15th February. He then dawdled away full four months in its environments, in tiger shooting, attending dance and singing, and even kite flying. The 140 miles between the Tāpti and the Narmadā were crossed in 18 days, and he arrived at Hāndiā on the south bank of the latter river on 3rd July. And then followed another halt of four months and a half, partly owing to the necessity of calling in all his detachments from far and near in fear of Jaswant Holkar's military strength, and partly because the heavy rains had made the river unfordable and the roads impassable. These fatuous delays ruined his military position in Malwa. [*PRC* vi 386, 389. Gulgulé D.]

For the protection of his agents in Malwa from Holkar's myriads of predatory horse, stiffened by European-led infantry and Mir Khan's doughty Pathan mercenaries, Daulat Rao adopted the incredibly foolish policy of sending up re-

reinforcements from the south in driblets at such intervals that co-operation or junction among them was impossible. On 2nd May 1801 from Burhānpur he had detached George Hessing with five battalions, and this force had reached Ujjain in safety about the 28th of that month. "A few days later Sindhia detached Lieut. MacIntyre with the fourth battalion from Hessing's brigade and a second from Filoze's, to follow and support the advanced column. Three days later he detached two of Sutherland's battalions from the First Brigade, under Capt. Gautier, to further strengthen Hessing, and finally crowned his imbecility by closing up the rear, after another interval, with two more of Sutherland's battalions and a park of artillery under Captain Brownrigg. There was thus an *echelle* of small isolated detachments with twenty, thirty, and forty miles between each, marching against an enemy whose entire strength was concentrated on the objective point." (H. Compton 251.)

§ 7. *Battles of Newri and Satwās*

It is necessary to give the full topography of the scene of the war in order to enable the reader to follow the operations clearly. Daulat Rao Sindhia's main camp and family rested near *Hāndia*, on the south bank of the Narmadā. On the north bank of the river, facing Hāndiā lay the town of Nimāwar, which served as the other bridge-head to his army. A broken plain stretched for 18 miles west of Nimāwar to the town of *Satwās*, and the route was intersected only by small *nalās* draining southwards into the great river. Fourteen miles north-west of Satwās stood *Bijwāra*, at the eastern end of a pass after crossing which and debouching on the plain at the village of Dhan talav at its western mouth, the road reached the town of Unchaud, another thirteen miles from Bijwāra. Sixteen miles north-west of this Unchaud lay the city of Newri, and sixteen miles further off in the same direction lay Dewās. Ujjain was 22 miles north-west of Dewās and Indore 32 miles south of Ujjain. It will be seen that Daulat Rao had to avoid the country due south

of his capital Ujjain, because it was very hilly, broken, and covered by Holkar's possessions. He had to make a long detour from Burhānpur *north-eastwards* to Hāndiā and then from the Narmadā *north-westwards* to reach Ujjain. His capital lay blocked by enemy territory on the south and the west, while in the region north of it Holkar's roving light horse had driven Sindhia's unprotected officers and posts entirely into the defensive.

Jaswant Rao Holkar was too good a general to miss the opportunity presented by Daulat Rao's imbecile strategy. He at once prepared to attack his enemy's scattered detachments in detail. By-passing Ujjain at the furthest end of the Sindhian line as too isolated a post to cut his rear or to defend itself unless strongly reinforced in the meantime, Jaswant Rao swooped down upon MacIntyre at Newri on 25th June 1801. This detachment, only two battalions of infantry and five hundred horse, was hopelessly outnumbered by Holkar's vast hordes, but it fought desperately, inflicting severe loss (magnified to over one thousand by the Sindhian news-writers) in Holkar's ranks. When their ammunition was exhausted the sepoys laid down their arms. MacIntyre and his other two European officers were taken prisoners, and so also were Dāji Bābu Rām, Mulchand and Rāz Muhammad's son. Holkar's spoils amounted to 200 horses, 100 firelocks, and seven small guns.

Jaswant Rao followed up his victory by at once occupying the Unchaud pass and sending his troops ahead to attack Satwās. The tide of invasion flooded the level country of Satwās and beyond, preceded by groups of Pindhari light horsemen, eddying round Sindhia's villages or combining to attack his military posts. But the defence held. Brownrigg was a commander who combined an Irishman's desperate valour with the cool calculation and organising power of a veteran of many battles. When the Pindhari vanguard of Holkar's army first appeared before Satwās, Brownrigg sheltering his men behind the walls of that fortified village kept them back by his gun fire. When the Pindharis fell back

to their base in the pass, Brownrigg evacuated Satwās before they could return with guns and infantry, and retreating took post near the north bank of the Narmadā, some fourteen miles south-east of Satwās, within easy reach of his own base, the bridge-head at Nimāwar, opposite the camp of Daulat Rao at Hāndiā Here all the Sindhian detachments on the north bank were assembled, and a grand park of artillery had been already built up On 2nd July, he received further reinforcements of two battalions of infantry sent up by Daulat Rao under Devji Gauli and Sadāshiv Rao

It was a naturally strong position, with the broad river protecting its rear, while its front and wings were intersected by many small *nālās* (ravines) which hindered the cavalry charges so dear to the Holkar horse. Meantime Jaswant Rao had occupied Satwās, and on 4th July 1801 he launched his grand attack on Brownrigg He detached Plumet and Kushābā Bakhshi with four battalions of trained infantry and a large cavalry force and eight guns to assault this Sindhian post. As Holkar's horsemen galloped up to the front, they were mowed down by the accurate grape shot fired from Brownrigg's guns skilfully dispersed along his line. The sepoys under Plumet fought with great spirit, and forced their way to Sindhia's baggage camp, but a heavy discharge of grape (or chain-shot, according to Basawan Lal) from Brownrigg's artillery kept concealed here and hitherto held in reserve, cut them down in hundreds and after a two hours' sharp contest they fell back, Plumet himself being wounded and eight of his guns abandoned in the field But Jaswant Holkar was a general who knew not defeat He rallied his men in person and led them on to a renewed attack by which he recovered six of his guns, but could not change the issue of a lost battle He retreated to Satwās, with enormous losses Brownrigg's casualties were only 107 men including Lt Rowbotham *

* A news-writer in Sindhia's camp reports that on Holkar's side 2 or 3 sardārs and four to five hundred men were slain, and in Daulat Rao's army Devji Gauli (not true) and about one hundred horse (*patak*) Thakur, ii 43 (Bāpu H killed)

§ 8 *Jaswant Holkar captures Ujjain, 18th July 1801*

The defeat was decisive so far as the eastern half of the line was concerned. If there had been a military genius in command of Daulat Rao's operations and the heavy rains had not made the soft soil of Malwa impassable for guns and laden carts, the victors would have pushed on westwards and effected a junction with Hessing's corps advancing from Ujjain towards it. To avoid being caught between two such forces, Jaswant slipped out of Satwās and hastened back to Indore. His genius enabled him to retrieve his fame and nullify Sindhia's triumph by a lightning blow which he alone knew how to deal. He crushed George Hessing at Ujjain only 13 days after his own repulse by Brownrigg.

Hessing had reached Ujjain with his battalions about the 28th of May, under orders to remain on the defensive till reinforced by his master. He took post in the unfinished fort of Bhairon-garh, three miles north of Ujjain City. But on hearing of the disaster to MacIntyre, he marched out towards Shujāwalpur to join Chintāman Atmārām Wākdé,* who was vainly trying with his 5,000 Maratha horse to uphold Sindhia's authority in that district. On the other side, Jaswant Holkar after his repulse at Satwās fell back on Indore, and called upon Mir Khan to unite with him near Ujjain for an attack. Mir Khan promptly set out westwards, driving Hessing and Wākdé before him. Leaving his camp and baggage at Tarānā (20 miles north-east of Ujjain) he arrived east of that capital, in the afternoon of 17th July. Jaswant had already arrived a few miles south of that city on the same day at noon. The two allies soon effected a junction and launched their attack on Hessing two hours before sunset. The Sindhian detachment had taken post between Gogā Shāh's hillock and Ankpātā, with their back to the city-walls. That evening there was time for an artillery duel only.

* Atmārām Shivarām Nāmdé (also Wākdé) was appointed diwān by Mahadji. He had three sons, Chintāman, Krishna Rao (whose adopted son was Balwant) and Shivarām. *Tārikh Jāgirdārān Gwalior*, i. p. 504.

After nightfall Jaswant himself, from his base two miles behind, rode up to his vanguard (under the command of Kushābā Bakhshi) which was facing Hessing's post During the night Mir Khan's corps and Holkar's two brigades called the Plumet Campoo (commanded by M Fleury) and the Maharaj Campoo (commanded by Harnāth chelā) were pushed up to the front, and they entrenched themselves, blockading the enemy's position Jaswant held a council of war with his commanders and matured the plan of attack Next morning the fighting was renewed Holkar's infantry was repulsed and had to flee for shelter to Mir Khan The Pathan horse charged, but were driven back by discharges of grape Then the rain burst "like Noah's flood" The blinding showers stopped the firing of muskets and cannon, the superiority of fire arms and discipline was wiped out, the ground turned into a quagmire Seizing this opportunity, Jaswant Rao gave his pre-concerted signal by firing a rocket The Pathans, the Deccani horse, and the Pindharis swarmed in thousands upon Hessing's corps, whose useless flint-locks were no match for their enemy's long spears But Hessing's sepoys fought with desperate courage to the end, as Jaswant himself admits in his report Out of a force of six infantry battalions and 3,000 to 3,500 Maratha horse on Sindhia's side, two thousand men were reported as killed or wounded The Deccan horse managed to escape, but the battalions were cut up "Of the twelve European officers, eight were killed and three wounded and taken prisoner, Hessing alone escaping Chinto Atmārām was reported as killed Thirty pieces of cannon and all the camp and stores of Hessing fell into the victor's hands But the strong will of Jaswant Rao kept his soldiers from sacking the rich capital of Sindhia Sir John Malcolm rightly praised "the order Jaswant Rao had established and the vigour of his character, (as proved by) the fact that Ujjain was not plundered after this success, but he reserved it from his troops to exact a heavy contribution himself from its wealthy inhabitants" (*Central India*, 2nd ed i 215

Mohan S 93 *a* PRC ix 28 Thakur, ii 38 Gulgulé Basāwan, p 159 of my ms)

After this victory Jaswant Holkar remained encamped at Udāsā's Tank, three miles north-east of the city On 21st Sept he made his entry into the Sindhian capital to enforce his demand of 15 lakhs as war indemnity from the city The news-report speaks of his being the veritable god of Death to the Brahmans and as placing them under chastisement, while the women were spared any kind of molestation, but his government got less than an eighth part of what was levied from the citizens, all the rest being consumed by his officers, a great dearness of food stuff in the city killed off its poorer population (Thakur, ii 46)

The most reliable account of this battle of Ujjain is given in the despatches of Resident Collins's agent in Ujjain, Jaswant Holkar's letter to Bhārāmal Dādā, and the report of Lāji Ballāl's envoy in Daulat Rao's camp—all of which are absolutely contemporary and based on personal knowledge This account is supported and enriched by many details in the Holkar family tradition recorded in the *Kaifiyat* The battle raged for two successive days, the decisive rain-burst just before the final charge of Holkar's army is given in Bhawāni Shankar's narrative and in Basāwan Lāl's *Life of Amir Khan* These sources prove the falsity of Herbert Compton's story of the battle (*Adventurers*, pp 255 and 363) He is wrong (*i*) in ascribing the conception of the attack on Ujjain to Mir Khan—whose bold initiative alone made "Holkar pluck up heart",—as the timing of the movements of the two branches of Holkar's army and even the assertion of Mir Khan's eulogist, prove that the plan originated in Jaswant's brain, (*ii*) Compton is not justified in asserting that "Hessing behaved in a most cowardly manner, flying at an early period of the action" and being "a half-caste son, by a native woman (really a French mestiche), of gallant old John Hessing, failed to demonstrate the doctrine of heredity"

The true facts are that the position of Sindhia's detachment at Ujjain was hopelessly weak, and only a Lakhwa Dādā could have saved it Hessing had brought back from the Shujāwalpur side to Ujjain a brigade worn out (*hairān*) by constant retreat before a pursuing enemy, with less than one day's time in which to fortify his post There was no fort in the true sense in Ujjain, but only a city wall, of no defence against artillery Even Bhairongarh was incomplete and in ruin at this time

§ 9 *Sharzā Rao defeats Jaswant at Indore, October 1801*

Ujjain was lost to Daulat Rao on 18th July 1801 The immediate effect of the reverse was to make him send urgent calls to his generals in Khāndesh and Mahārāshtra to hasten to his side But the rains now set in with unusual violence and made campaigning impossible for the next month and a half

Major Brownrigg had followed up his victory by occupying the Unchaud pass and encamping at its western mouth at the village of Dhan Talāv (c 12 Aug) Sharzā Rao Ghātgé joined Daulat Rao's camp at Hāndiā (20 Aug) and supplied him with a counsellor possessed of quick decision and driving power But Sindhia's chief gain at this time was the seduction of Chevalier Dudrenec and his son-in-law Plumet from Holkar's service (August), though the brigades of these two officers continued in Holkar's pay, the men lost such experienced European leadership in their next battles with Sindhia

With the end of the rainy season, fighting was renewed. Sharzā Rao joined Brownrigg on 1st October, and the vast Sindhian army with their powerful artillery* moved confidently towards Ujjain Jaswant Holkar immediately evacuated that city and hastened to the defence of his own capital Indore, where he encamped at Khazrāni, a mile

* Bhawāni Shankar estimates this force as 6 battalions of Filose, 6 battalions of Brownrigg (i e Sutherland's corps) and 25,000 horse (95b)

north-east of the city. An agent of Sindhia immediately occupied Ujjain, but Sharzā Rao with the army, by-passing Ujjain, pushed on towards Indore.

On 5th October 1801 the rival hosts made contact in the plain enclosed by the Siprā and the Kan rivers north of Indore, and the fighting continued for ten days. Holkar's scouts under Fath Singh Māné first exchanged fire with the enemy's vanguard on the 5th. But Brownrigg advanced methodically towards Indore, forming his men into a huge column, protected by artillery in front and flanks and sheltering his baggage in the centre. Nothing could stand before science and discipline, and Jaswant Rao Holkar was forced to betake himself to the old light foray tactics (*ghanimi*) which proved futile now. As the Kotā news-writer in Sindhia's camp reported, "Holkar is not fighting face to face, but practising *ghanimi*. He cannot make a stand before our guns, and our troops are chasing him back." Jaswant displayed great personal bravery and always pushed on to the thick of the fight, but he had to yield ground every day.

On the 11th of October he staked everything on an attack in full force. The reckless fury of this charge broke the battalions of Filose, who formed Sindhia's van, no supports came up from behind, and the remnant of these battalions fled for shelter to the cavalry of Sharzā Rao, who abused Filose in the filthy language of which he was a master and charged him with cowardice and treason. Unable to bear this public disgrace, the poor Eurasian youth cut his own throat.* But the day was not really lost. Brownrigg had kept his battalions steady with "strength in reserve", and poured a deadly fire of grape upon Holkar's troops, who had as usual dispersed for plunder, thinking victory already achieved. Terrible execution was done upon their dense masses, and they broke and fled. Jaswant himself was

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* Compton, p. 352. Malcolm in his *Central India*, i. 220-226 gives a somewhat different account of the battle. I have relied on the despatches of Resident Collins (*PRC* ix) and the news-letters of Gulgule's agent.

charged by fifty of Sindhia's cavalry, but he manfully stood his ground with only five companions and saved himself

At last their methodical advance brought Brownrigg and Sharzā Rao within two miles of Indore, and here the decisive battle was fought on the 14th On that day, too, Jaswant displayed the greatest personal courage and persistence, but he was hopelessly outclassed in artillery, and his trained brigades had lost their beloved and experienced European leaders, through the desertion of Duchenec and Plumet and the imprisonment of their successors, Fleury and Malé, by the suspicious Jaswant Holkar's campoo troops were now under a timid and incompetent leader, Harnāth chelā or slave [Mohan S 95 *b* Thakur, ii 17]

The fighting raged throughout the day First, the orderly tactics and steady fire of Brownrigg's battalions totally broke up the Holkar campoo under Harnāth and they took to flight At the sight of this the myriads of Pindhari horsemen forming the rear of Jaswant's army vanished quickly In the meantime, in the other sector of the field, the division under Mir Khan was pressed very hard, and Jaswant advanced there to see things for himself and bring relief. Many of his horsemen followed him, thus leaving that sector of the entrenchment very thinly held Seizing this opportunity Brownrigg launched his infantry for the final blow They stormed the enemy's trenches at the point of the bayonet After a last desperate counter-attack by Jaswant himself, which for a time wrested back three of his abandoned guns, the struggle ended at sunset Holkar's defeat was complete, all his guns, numbering more than one hundred, his camp and stores were captured by the victors Jaswant fled away to Kushālgarh and Jāmghāt, and here most of his cavalry who had escaped death in battle by a timely flight, soon rallied round him, and with them he took to a life of predatory warfare, roaming all over the country, untrammelled by artillery or disciplined infantry, in the manner for which his great ancestor Malhar Holkar I was famous.

Sharzā Rao defeated Gujā Kumbār and Krishnāji Mahādik, who were holding Indore for Jaswant, and took possession of that city, a few days after the victory in the field. He now began to exact retribution from Holkar's capital for the oppression lately done by Jaswant at Ujjain. "Though the residents of the city offered to pay him 15 lakhs, he would not agree, but looted the place and began to dig up the floors and burn down the houses. For two days the city was sacked by the soldiers, but on the third order was restored by the highest authorities." After some weeks the victors withdrew from the town and Holkar's men reoccupied it. (Mohan S. 97 *a*. *PRC*. ix. 33. Gulgulé, letter of 19 Oct. 1801.)

§ 10. *Jaswant Rao Holkar's movements and aims, Oct. 1801—April 1802.*

After Sindhia's generals had defeated Holkar at Indore (14th October), Daulat Rao himself at last crossed over to the north side of the Narmadā and arrived at Ujjain on 11th November. He could not follow up his victory, because of his utter lack of money and the daily mutiny of his long-unpaid soldiery. In dread of Jaswant Holkar's military genius, Daulat Rao had recklessly increased his army, enlisting fresh light cavalry by the thousand and recalling his detachments from the districts where they had been feeding themselves. No finance minister could provide for such a bloated host. Moreover, Lakhwā Dādā was still roving in Mewār, and a strong detachment from Sindhia's army was detained there to oppose him.

Peace between Sindhia and Holkar was felt to be an urgent necessity by all thoughtful ministers and well-wishers of Mahārāshtra, in view of the lightning strokes by which Marquess Wellesley's diplomacy and arms were bringing British paramountcy over all the Indian States nearer and nearer. They had been entreating Daulat Rao and the Peshwā to effect a reconciliation with Jaswant Rao Holkar and thus restore the solidarity and strength of the Marātha

nation. But the claims of these two chiefs could not be harmonised by any ingenuity, as both of them lacked the spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice.

Jaswant Holkar demanded (*i*) that Daulat Rao Sindhia should hand over to him his prisoner Khandé Rao II (the minor son of Malhar Holkar II), to be set up as the formal head of the Holkar State with Jaswant himself as his regent and actual manager of affairs; (*ii*) that every village and fort in any part of India that had ever belonged to the Holkars should be restored to Jaswant, and the Houses of Sindhia and Holkar should be granted absolute parity in respect of territory, income and the allowance of power and resources by their sovereign the Peshwā. Such a parity had been enjoyed by the first founders of the two houses, under Bāji Rao I and Bālāji Bāji Peshwās; but in 1801 the proposed arrangement would have meant a clean sweep of the gains made by Mahādji Sindhia during a long and strenuous career, and a revival of the constant bickering between Holkar and Sindhia in all parts of India where they happened to be employed together. (*iii*) Thirdly, that Daulat Rao should cease to support Kāshi Rao Holkar with money, troops or influence at the Punā court, in his claim to the headship of the House of Holkar. On none of these points would Sindhia yield.

Reaching Ujjain on 19th November 1801, Daulat Rao encamped at Datta's Akhārā, in the environs without entering the city. But in less than a month he was driven out of the place by the famine and pestilence raging in and around it. Resuming his march on 12th December, he moved about in Malwa, *via* Sainhāten, Sanver, Dhār, Badhnāwar and Kachraud, till he returned to his camp outside Ujjain on 28th December at the end of that year, to begin that momentous march to the South which ended only with his defeat by General Wellesley in 1803.

We now turn to Jaswant Rao Holkar. Having lost his guns and equipment in the battle of Indore (14th Oct. 1801), he fell back half way towards his real capital Maheshwar

but soon afterwards returned and recovered Indore (c 10 Nov) He next took to a roving life plundering the country far and wide, and wearing out the detachments sent out by Sindhia in pursuit of him. His tactics are well described in the news-letters from Daulat Rao's camp "Holkar is not fighting face to face, but practising light foray tactics (*ghanimi*). Our *fauj* go in pursuit of him and he cannot make a stand before our guns" And, again, 'He roams about the country, never standing up to an open fight, but burning the villages, closing the roads to traffic and swooping down on our provision supplies Everything is dear in our camp, Holkar has left nothing in any village" When agents of General Perron visited him with a message, "Jaswant pointed to his horse and spear, and directed the men to tell their master that the former at all times afforded him a shade to sleep in, and the latter means of subsistence" (Gulgulé, *PRC* ix No 50, Malcolm, i 220 et seq)

In the course of this roving career, Jaswant Holkar moved so fast and so far that one almost loses his breath in following his steps on the map His expulsion from Indore on 14th October was retrieved by the restoration of his rule in that capital early next month But he himself ranged over the country far and near,—being reported at places as far apart as Navlai (*c* 10 Nov), Hatod (12 m n w of Indore, *c* 15 Nov), Maheshwar (*c* 23 Nov), Indore (*c* 2 Dec), Pratapgarh and Mandesor (*c* 6 January 1802), Jhabuā, Nāthdwārā (in Mewār, end of January), back again in Kota (*c* 20 Feb), Manpur (mid-way between Ujjain and the Narmādā, *c* 23 March), and again in Maheshwar (end of March) His policy in the end was to induce his eldest brother Kāshi Rao, to remove with him from Malwā to their ancestral dominions in Khāndesh, south of the Narmadā, and there successfully defy Sindhia's forces in concert with the Bāvan Pāgā sardārs, who had risen against the Peshwā and the Peshwā's defender Sindhia Kāshi Rao had left Punā when he found Daulat Rao's position there very weak and had come to his father's fort of Shendhwā in Khāndesh,

near the end of the year 1800. Losing all hopes of being established in his father's position and provided with sufficient money and force by Daulat Rao, the eldest Holkar prince moved from Shendhwa to Ahalyā Bāi's capital Maheshwar on 14th Aug. 1801. He had sent his congratulations to Jaswant on his victory over Sindhia at Ujjain in the previous month, and now after much writing Jaswant Rao came to Maheshwar and persuaded him to leave that city for Khāndesh in his company.

But on the way Kāshi Rao slipped out of the camp with his wife and followers, in the night of 3rd May 1802, and fled to the fort of Shendhwā, because he could not trust his ambitious and over-bearing younger brother. Tutelage under Jaswant Rao would have been a change more humiliating than vassalage under Sindhia and more dangerous too, because Jaswant's avowed policy of establishing the child Khandé Rao II as the lawful head of the House of Holkar with himself as the regent, would have reduced Kāshi Rao to the impotence of a dependent pensioner, who might be thrown into prison or strangled any day at the regent's political need. Hence, he broke away seeking safety in isolation. After Sindhia's victory at Indore (October 1801) a detachment of his army under Gopāl Bhāu was sent to operate in the country south of the Narmada. Here it came into collision with the forces that Jaswant Holkar began to send across the river from December onwards. Only skirmishes were fought, with varying results but no decision. Sindhia's position here was further weakened by the rebellious Bāvan Pāgā sardārs making common cause with Holkar, and this running sore did not heal before the fall of the Peshwā.

The war in Khāndesh dragged on languidly during the first quarter of 1802, and then the scene rapidly changed. In April, Jaswant himself crossed the Narmadā and joined his army in Khāndesh. Kāshi Rao having publicly abandoned him (3 May), Jaswant chalked out a new policy; he decided to put pressure on the Peshwā to declare the infant

Khandé Rao as the head of the Holkar State, with Jaswant as its working chief, on terms of absolute parity with Sindhia. This scheme he carried to success with relentless force and practical skill in the course of the next five months, but at the cost of Maratha independence.

CHAPTER XLV

CIVIL WAR IN MAHARASHTRA, 1802

§ 1 *The effect of the political folly of Baji Rao II*

At the beginning of May 1802, Jaswant Rao Holkar lost all hope of using his eldest brother as his screen and took up the policy of standing forth as the working head of the House of Holkar (vicariously for the infant Khāndé Rao II). He began to press the Peshwā with all his power to give public recognition to this claim. The timid and deceitful character of Bāji Rao and his truly oriental policy of gaining time by doing nothing decisive in the hope of "something turning up," led by an irresistible sequence of events to the Treaty of Bassein and the loss of Marātha independence.

Peace in the Marātha territories could have been imposed only by a suzerain strong enough to overawe his refractory feudatories and wise enough to make a clear-cut geographical division of their respective spheres of rule in Mālwā, Khāndesh and Hindustan. Only such a division could have permanently put a stop to their eternal boundary disputes, encroachments across the frontier, and mutual raids and reprisals. The life of the Marātha empire depended on the solution of the hereditary rivalry between Sindhia and Holkar. But such a feat of supreme statesmanship was beyond the mental capacity and armed strength of Baji Rao II. It was also opposed to the traditional Punā policy of never settling a dispute finally, but keeping two separate and rival authorities in the same locality so as to weaken both of them and make both dependent on the central Government and thus increase the chance of the Punā Court exacting as much money as possible from the two.

In addition to this foolish policy of selfish gain, Bāji Rao had but too good a reason to dread Jaswant Holkar. He had injured the strongest living member of the Holkar family beyond forgiveness, by his brutal execution of his brother Vitoji. When this rebel was brought to Punā as a captive, Bāji Rao gave him two hundred lashes with a whip and then tying him to the leg of an elephant had him trampled to death publicly in the streets (16 April 1801), and threw his wife and son into prison.*

Vitoji was no doubt an unmitigated ruffian and had done incalculable harm to the Peshwā's prestige by his heartless and unprovoked devastation of the Peshwā's estates as a freebooter fighting on his own account. He had sinned heavily, but he was at the same time the son of a ruling Holkar, and his princely blood and the past services of his family to the Peshwās made him deserve a milder punishment, or at least a less humiliating form of death. Jaswant Holkar nursed in his heart a silent but sleepless thirst of vengeance on the Peshwā and his three advisers in this tragedy, and they knew it.

§ 2. *Jaswant Holkar invades the Deccan—Fath Singh Māné's campaign*

Leaving Shendhwā on 4th May 1802, Jaswant crossed the Tapti into West Khāndesh, and here we find him halting at Chālisgāon on the 20th of that month. At Malégāon, Pārolé, Ner (18 miles west of Dhuliā), and other places in this region, he spent the next two months, June and July. But his advanced division of light cavalry with guns, under Fath Singh Māné, crossed the Godāvari, and after plundering the north Ahmadnagar district arrived near that fort on 25th June. About the same time (c. 21st June) Shahāmat Khan with his Pathān horse in Holkar's pay, burst into the Nāsik district, robbing the people with ruth-

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* *PRC.* vi. 405. Khare, xii. No. 6027. Thākur, ii. 32, 34.

less vigour Early next month the Khan turned from Nasik south-eastwards to Sinnar (70 miles north-west of Ahmadnagar) in order to be nearer to Māné for concerted action On 2nd August, Jaswant himself reached Sangamner, about midway on the road from Nāsik to Ahmadnagar, and assumed direct control of the operations for carrying the war into the Peshwā's homeland *

The course of events will become clearer if we follow the campaign of each division separately The first on the scene was Fath Singh Māné Arrived at Dongargāon, 11 miles north of Ahmadnagar on 25th June, he sent a cavalry force on to raid the environs of that city. The country round was pillaged by his vanguard under Jagannāth Rām Shenvi, but the famous fort held out under its Sindhian commandant Soon afterwards Māné removed to Farhā Bāgh, six miles s e of Ahmadnagar, with his whole army, killed a few hundred Arab defenders and plundered half of the town (*peth*) lying outside the fort walls (*c*. 7th July) A week earlier he had detached a force under Abāji Lakshman who occupied Sindhia's ancestral village of Jāmgāon, 16 miles south-west of Ahmadnagar and began to dig up the floors of the houses for concealed treasure

From Farhā Bāgh, Māné sent another detachment of 3000 horse, towards the north bank of the Bhimā river opposite Gār-Dond, 44 miles due east of Punā (*c* 10th July) His baggage and stores in following this corps were opposed by a sortie from Ahmadnagar, but Māné himself came up in support and cleared the way after a stiff fight (18 July) Shahāmat Khan by way of Nāsik, Sinnar and Rāhuri (20 m n of Ahmadnagar) now joined Māné, whose total strength was thus raised to 25,000 horse and foot and 30 guns He next raided the entire country south of

* This campaign is best described in *PRC* ix Khare xiv, Gulgulé Daft *Purandaré D* vol ii Thakur, i. Occasional light from Bhāgwat's *Holkarshāhi Patra-vyavahār*, First half, pt 1 Mohan S and the traditional *Holkarānchi Kaifiyat* II Compton and *As Annual Reg* for 1803

Ahmadnagar down to the Bhimā river at Pedgāon. The monsoon rains and flooded rivers forced Māne to halt during the whole month of August, some twenty miles north of Dond, unable to cross the Bhimā and reach the country on the south bank east of Punā.

In the meantime, the Peshwā had got together a scratch force of 2500 men slowly and in driblets, and sent them under Pāndoji Kunjar with his gold-embroidered banner to Gār-Dond, to block the eastern approach to Punā. No fighting was expected, as he hoped that the prestige of his State banner would awe the rebel into retreat, because all this time Jaswant Holkar had been writing to him, professing that he was a loyal subject and had come not to fight his master but to wait on him and secure his order for the restoration of the House of Holkar to its former dignity and estates. To this the Peshwā had replied by ordering him to go back beyond the Tapti, and promising to make a settlement of his feud with Sindhiā. But a clash could not be long avoided. In the night between 20th and 21st August Māné's troops from the north bank opened fire on the sleeping camp of Pāndoji Kunjar at Gār, and threw it into a wild consternation.

Next morning some Pindhāris of Holkar whom Māné had sent across the Bhimā in boats, seized the ponies and some other property of Kunjar's army in the open plain between Gār and Dond. The heroic defenders of the Peshwā's capital deserted their post and made a panic flight from Gār to Pātas, six miles to the south-west. Even here Kunjar could not keep all of his men. Owing to the Peshwa's parsimony, these ill-fed, ill clad, unpaid soldiers, unable to bear the rain and starvation of the Gār-camp, had been drifting back to Punā in batches for some time before; even Pātas was evacuated in a few days and the detachment recalled to Punā.

But it was not Holkar's policy to push Māné's thrust home at this stage. Under his new orders Māné also fell back. On 31st August, his infantry patrol in Dond, follow-

ing the usual Marātha tactics, set fire to the houses of the village they had so long occupied and crossed back to the north bank, and Māne after collecting his forces together, marched south-east into the Pandhārpur district Looting the country on the way he reached Kārkomb, 12 miles north of Pandhārpur, about 10th September and in that region kept roving far and wide till the 28th of that month Though he squeezed money out of the rich and the public officers, he allowed no sacrilege or oppression within the holy precincts of Pandhārpur The Brāhman reporter from Punā gratefully admits, "Māne came to Pandhārpur district, and strictly forbade his troops to do any harm to anybody There were many Muslims under him, but none mis behaved himself Māné performed *pujā* and *tarpan* (worship and oblation) The god (Vitobā) has saved the holy *tirtha*"

§ 3 *The plunder of the Nāsik district Sindhiā's troops arrive, September 1802*

But before the month of September ended, the military balance was upset and a complete change of strategy was forced on Jaswant Rao After his arrival at Sangamner, on 2nd August, he had employed himself for three weeks in capturing Gālnā, Chāndor, and some other forts in the Chāndor range, and levying contributions from the North Nāsik district Then on 11th September, he moved south and west to Nāsik city and demanded a ranson of thirty lakhs from that holy place His detachments under Māné and Shahāmat Khan were ordered to unite ten *kos* east of Rāhuri (a road centre 20 miles north of Ahmadnagar), to bar the approach of Sindhiā's reinforcements to their great military depot at Ahmadnagar A large detachment of Daulat Rao's army, consisting of *paltan* and *fauj* under Sadāshiv Bhāskar, starting from Burhānpur, had already crossed the Godāvari and was marching to the relief of Ahmadnagar It reached the environs of that fort on 16th September and next day set out for Kātrābād-Māndavgāon, eighteen miles south

of it, to expel Mānē's raiding bands from the region of Rāsin, Bhose and Kārkomb.

At the very outset as Jaswant Holkar approached the Marātha homeland, the Peshwā sent frantic appeals to Daulat Rao Sindhiā to save him by despatching a strong army to the Punā district. Sindhiā could not immediately comply; his hands were full of the campaign he was waging in the north to capture all the strong places of Holkar in Mālwā, and the army he assembled at Burhānpur under Gopāl Bhāu and Sadāshiv Bakhshi was at first forbidden to advance south and assume the offensive. Nor could these generals stir from their base, because of their utter want of money and the refusal of their soldiers to march unless their arrears were cleared. The two generals also quarrelled and pulled different ways; Gopāl Bhāu engaged himself profitably in robbing the baron of Asirgarh of his possessions in that region. However, in the middle of September, Sadāshiv did reach Ahmadnagar, as we have seen. He was reinforced by another corps near the end of that month, and got ready to march to the defence of Punā.

Meantime, the spoliation of the Nāsik district took a long time and it was only at the end of September that Jaswant could march into the Junnar subdivision of the Punā district, immediately south of Nasik. Here a strong Sindhian division of 10,000 horse and one full brigade of trained infantry with 10 guns under Sadashiv Bhāskar had arrived and halted by the Peshwā's directions at Nārāyangāon, nine miles south-east of Junnar city, and only 44 miles north of Punā. Here the first open clash between the rival forces took place. Skirmishes with the Holkar horsemen roving in that district began on 3rd October.

§ 1. *Jaswant's tactics—Sindhiā's detachment push their way north of Punā, October.*

The theatre of the campaign that followed can be roughly described as an inverted triangle with a 72-mile long base from Ahmadnagar south-westwards to Punā, and its

apex at Pandharpur, 106 miles due south of Ahmadnagar, while the third side, 116 miles in length, joined Pandharpur to Punā in a north-westernly slant. Up to now Jaswant had campaigned north of the straight line from Ahmadnagar to Punā, and his lighter force enabled him to manoeuvre south of this line and back again to the north at will. Sindhiā's slow-moving battalions and artillery had to make their way down this straight road from Ahmadnagar to Punā, obstructed by Jaswant's mobile cavalry at every pass and ferry on the way.

Jaswant's tactics were to disperse for plunder and combine for battle. His forces, formed into three separate divisions, spread out like fans and combed the entire country for food and spoils. A famine was raging throughout the Deccan and Central India, caused by widespread predatory war following a year of drought. Traders of grain ceased to move on the roads, which were infested by the brutal Pindhāri bands of the rival armies. The villages where grain used to be stored had been sacked and now lay deserted. Marāthi newsletters tell one monotonous tale of the people's suffering: "The Pindhāris, sparing Punā city only, have made the country on all sides up to the Ghātmāthā in the west, a lampless desolation." 'Holkar's disturbances have devastated the Punā district; all the people have fled away; the scarcity is extreme." Only the widest dispersion and extreme rapidity in changing ground enabled Holkar's immense host to live on the country; and for such tactics, his indigenous cavalry, then known to be the best in India, was eminently suited.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that Jaswant at this stage was exactly repeating the tactics of his great ancestor, Malhar Holkar I, as he had done in Mālwā in 1801. On the contrary, the myriads of light forayers spreading out before his army, formed only the probing knife of his attack. But the core of his army combined both the new and the old instruments of war: he now brought into the Deccan a large corps of trained infantry under

highly competent European officers like Hardinge, Armstrong and Vickers, with their powerful artillery and Mir Khan's tough Pathān fighters, both horse and foot This infantry moved rather slowly and was put to use only in pitched battles, when all the branches of the Holkar army were united for action

Happier in this respect than Daulat Rao the Holkar chief was making war pay for war Being the first to raid a virgin field like Khāndesh or Mahārāshtra, he sucked the country dry of its wealth and food, so that nothing was left for Sindhiā's troops who came after In Khāndesh, he collected 20 lakhs of Rupees during three weeks of May, and these resources enabled him to pay his cavalry and greatly increase the strength and efficiency of his European-trained infantry (Mohan S 106 *a*)

With the strong Sindhian force at Nārāyangāon blocking the road to Punā, Jaswant Holkar decided to launch a two-pronged attack on the Peshwā's capital, he himself with Shahāmat Khan would move from Alé-Belhā and Junnar and engage this enemy column in the north, while in the south Fath Singh Māné would advance at the same time from Pandharpur north-westwards up the Nirā valley to Bārāmati and Jejuri and threaten Punā from its south-east, (beginning of October)

Before this Shahāmat Khan had been plundering and burning the Junnar region for a week, and his roving bands had penetrated as far as Ganesh-Khind, (the present northern suburb of Punā) He now attacked the Sindhian column, between Nārāyangāon and Utur On the first day (c 5 Oct), the Sindhian horsemen marching several miles ahead of their infantry support, were driven back by the superior Pathān cavalry with the loss of some guns and baggage, and took refuge in the infantry encampment That evening Jaswant himself arrived in the field Next day the attack was pressed home, but Sindhia's firepower was incomparably superior, and after a close fight in which Shahāmat received a wound and a horse was shot under Jaswant, the Holkar

force was driven back for six miles to Ojhār (5 miles s e of Junnar), abandoning three of its guns and one flag Holkar then decided to break off the engagement and fall back eastwards (6 Oct)* As a reporter in Sindhia's camp wrote —"Holkar cannot advance before our guns, but Sindhia's army, too, cannot pursue him on account of his superiority in cavalry".

§ 5 *Battle of Bārāmati—flight of Peshwā's general, 8th October*

We now turn to the other prong of Jaswant's plan for attacking Punā, namely the push along the north-western arm of our imaginary triangle whose apex was at Pandhārpur Fath Singh Mānē, with his forces considerably strengthened in the meantime, left Pandhārpur (c 27th September) and made his way unopposed north-westwards up the Nirā river, giving out that he only wanted to make a pilgrimage to Jejuri, and worship the tutelary goddess of the Holkar family there The move was ominous, as Jejuri lay only 30 miles south-east of Punā with nothing but the Borghāt as an obstacle between the two places, and there were no Sindhian troops in that region within a hundred miles The wildest panic broke out in Punā at the news of Mānē's approach

The Peshwa had no army worth the name His best advisers had shown him how he was between two fires, and that whether Holkar or Sindhia triumphed he would be equally the helpless slave of his own victorious vassal, while if he sought British armed aid as his father had done 27

* As Jaswant wrote, "Everywhere there was face to face fighting There was a shower of shot and bullets, and the cannon balls (grape?) grazed my turban and tunic, but Sri Krishna warded them off with his discus" (Thakur, ii No 59) Much confusion has been created by each side claiming the victory, and ignoring its own losses But Bhawāni Shankar's personal recollections and the contemporary Punā news-letters enable us to see the truth The engagement really extended over two days, with opposite results, but in the end Holkar had to retire Khare, Nos 6444-6446, 6458, 6452 Gurgeh, 12 Oct Mohan S f 107b *PRC* x 60

years ago, he would remove the last obstacle to the imposition of British paramountcy over all India, which Marquess Wellesley's successful statesmanship had made imminent. So, they urged him to raise an adequate army of his own and assert his independence. No advice could have been more fatuous. Bāji Rao II had neither the money nor the dependable agents necessary for carrying out such a plan. He had already alienated all the hereditary supporters of his house by disgracing and spoliating the old feudatories and all decent people by his licentious and deceitful character. Himself a coward sunk in sadist vices, he could not personally lead troops into action, but was the first to flee away from Punā at the approach of danger. However, by large promises and small cash payments, some thousands of rabble horsemen and ragged infantry were got together and sent to Bārāmati to bar the path of Māné. Even this force could not be properly equipped and fed, as Bāji Rao would not loosen his purse-strings, but only issued lordly orders on his vassals to pay these levies! The hungry soldiers began to trickle back from the Bārāmati camp to Punā in despair. Even his household troopers (*huzurāt*), so necessary for stiffening the raw recruits, refused to march out of Punā unless their long-standing arrears were cleared and adequate munitions supplied to them.

Worst of all, no competent general was available to lead this expedition, as all men of honour and ability had begun to shun him, and Bāji Rao's sole confidants and agents were the pimps and sycophants who formed the inner circle of his court. The commanders of the Bārāmati force were Purandaré and Pāndoji Kunjar, the veteran heroes of the recent flight from Dond, and only one brave but rash fighter,

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* The commanders were Nānā (Trimbak Mahipat) Purandare, Pāndoji Kunjar, Ganpat Rao Pānsé (chief of artillery), and Māloji Ghorpade. Chintāman Rao Āpā Patwardhan, did not arrive in time for the battle. Kh 6446, 6461.

Medad (spelt *Merad* in the maps and *Merda* in the Marāthi letters), also called *Amrāvati*, is one mile north-west of Bārāmati.

Morgāon or *Moreshwar* is 12m. east of Jejuri, and 10m. west of the camp at Jalgāon. (*Bomb. Gaz.*, XVIII, pt. 3, p. 259.)

Māloji Ghorpadé.* Their instructions were not to fight Mané, but to plant the royal standard (*zari patakā*) before their ranks and dare the rebel to outrage public opinion throughout Mahārāshtra by firing on the national flag. Thus a prestige which he had lost by his own cowardice and deceit, was expected to save him in the clash of arms!

The Peshwā's detachment encamped at Jalgāon, seven miles west of Bārāmati, when Māné reached Medad six miles to their east. Purandaré, leaving his camp standing, advanced with all his forces against him, on 8th October. Māné sent word to ask, "I am going on a pilgrimage to Jejuri and do not intend any hostility to you. My master has forbidden me to fight the Peshwā's troops. Tell me what you mean." Purandaré answered, "The Peshwā has ordered me to punish you." So saying, he opened fire on Māné. The Holkar general told his troops that the Peshwā's banner represented their sovereign, and they must not attack it before 50 shots had been fired from under that banner. After the 50th discharge from Purandaré's guns had been counted, Māné opened his own fire and set his horsemen to the gallop. The military bubble from Punā immediately burst. "When Māné advanced, none of our men drew their arms, they all broke and fled away," as a writer from Punā reported. The Chitpāvan commander-in-chief, the hereditary friend and supporter of the house of the Peshwās, was the first in the race for safety, abandoning his guns, abandoning the golden banner solemnly entrusted to his keeping, Nānā Purandaré, galloped away with his bare life. The second in command, Pāndoji Kunjar ran so blindly in his flight, that for three days after he could not be traced, to the intense grief of his worthy father Bāloji, the favourite pimp of Bāji Rao. The soldiers were worthy of such leaders. "All who had horses escaped, those on foot were seized and plundered of all their belongings." Only one man, Māloji Ghorpadé, with his small personal contingent, made a stand round the Peshwā's banner and fought for an hour against hopeless odds, to check the enemy's

advance, but he fell down from his horse after he had received five wounds and his charger had been speared.

The field before him being absolutely clear, Māné swept on to the deserted camp of the enemy, and captured all their guns, much of their baggage, and above all the elephant carrying the golden banner on its back. He dismounted, loyally salāmed the national flag, and after two days sent it back to Purandaré in his place of retreat near Sāswād (at Kumbhāi-bālnā). The chivalrous Māne placed the captive Ghorpade in a *palki*, carefully dressed his wounds, and set him free.

§ 6. *Gathering of hosts for battle outside Punā*

Māne, after this ludicrous end of a foot-race rather than a battle, encamped at Moreshwar, twelve miles east of Jejuri and 16 miles north-west of Medad (Bārāmati), while the Peshwā's runaway troops began to reassemble under Purandaré in his new camp near Sāswād, 20 miles west of the victor's new position. Jaswant Rao, after learning of this affair, which clearly proved how worthless the Punā army was, rapidly moved south from Pārner and met Māne at Moreshwar on the 14th. But Māné's illness delayed their future plans by four or five days. On the 17th of the month Holkar visited the shrine of Jejuri, without doing any outrage there but fleecing the rich priests and traders, and halted three miles east of that holy city till the 20th.

On 21st October the forces of the Peshwā began to take post in the plain east of the Marātha capital, and here the strong Sindhian column under Sadāshiv Bhāskar Bakhshi arrived on the 22nd and occupied their former cantonments of Mahādji Sindhia's days at Wanowri. Hearing of the gathering of his enemies, Jaswant Rao Holkar from Jejuri wrote to the Peshwā on the 22nd, begging him to send four front-rank envoys for settling his feud with Sindhia on the basis of absolute equality between the rival houses. Then he drew in his detachments and marched in full force from

the neighbourhood of Jejuri, crossed the Bor-ghāt and by way of Loni and Kāvdi arrived near Theur the next day

His message reached the Peshwā in the morning of the 23rd The whole of that day was wasted by this imbecile court in alarm, confusion and futile discussions Bāloji Kunjar and Nimbāji Bhāskar two of the envoys summoned by Holkar, refused to go, they had worked out the brutal sentence of death on Vitoji Holkar and they knew, only too well what they were to expect from Vitoji's brother At last, after nightfall, five servants of third-rate rank were sent by the Peshwā to Jaswant to deliver his message and make a compromise. They reached his camp near Theur at midnight, but he immediately turned them out bluntly saying, "I cannot busy myself in this child's play The three men I had demanded as the Peshwā's agents have not been sent to me I have nothing to say to any one else from that side"

The baffled envoys returned to the Peshwā's palace some three hours before dawn, and another conference was held there The three men demanded by Jaswant again refused to go to him, but advised their master to fight, boasting that with the great power and prestige of the Peshwā on their side they would put Jaswant Rao to flight The cowardly Bāji Rao had no help but to yield The same fiery advice had been given to the Peshwā by Sindhia's Bakhshi Sadāshiv Bhāskar and brigade-commander Dawes, when they waited on him after reaching Wanowri They had boasted, "We shall force Jaswant Holkar to flee away by our battalion tactics and our grape-shot, swivel gun-fire shells and musketry fire Your Highness will have only to look at the show from a distance" They were supplied with some guns, munitions and money Thus both sides were equally eager for the appeal to arms

§ 7 *Battle of Hadapsar* (*Punā*)

On Sunday the 25th of October 1802, the two sides at last made their long-sought appeal to the god of war

Sindhia's troops came out of their old encampment at Wanowri and drew up on the plain stretching eastwards from it to Hadapsar, with their face to the rising sun and their back to the city of Punā. Holkar's army marching from Kavdi to Hadapsar, took post opposite them, facing the west.

On paper the total strength of the rival hosts were Holkar's 1,44,000 men and Sindhia's 84,000. Holkar fielded 16 battalions of European-trained infantry (11,000 strong) and 2,000 indigenous but very doughty Pathan foot-musketeers, besides 6,000 irregulars (mostly Ruhelas and other professional soldiers)—a total of 19,000 infantry against Sindhia's eleven battalions of trained sepoys (7,500 strong), excluding four battalions (2,500 muskets) of the Peshwā, "badly appointed, badly paid", without training or discipline, who fled away as soon as the battle joined, and therefore did not count.

In cavalry Holkar's superiority was even greater; under his banners marched 1,25,000 horsemen ("at a very moderate statement"), against Sindhia's 68,000 men besides the Peshwa's rabble of 6,000 horsemen which could never look an enemy in the face. In addition to this almost twofold superiority in number, Holkar's cavalry had then proved itself the best in India.* His battalions, too, were commanded by many experienced European officers, mostly driven out of Daulat Rao's service by Perron's anti-British policy, so that Sindhia's sepoys were led in this battle only by a Eurasian youth, Captain Dawes, a Captain Catts, a lad

* "The cavalry of Sindhia, are mostly Marathas and by no means of so brave a character as the Pathans and other Musalmans who chiefly compose Holkar's horse." (Letter of an English Officer in Holkar's camp. *Asiatic Annual Reg* for 1803) "Holkar's cavalry are superior to those of Sindhia, being better officered, and more correspondent with the real Maratha custom of predatory warfare." (George Thomas's report, in Francklin's *Mil Memoirs of G Thomas*, 267)

Sources for this battle—*Asiatic Annual Reg* for 1803 (Bombay Occur p 54, Bengal Occur pp 59-61). Resident Close to G G 26 Oct 1802. H Compton, pp 279-281, 362. Mohan S *f* 109-110. *Imamamah*. Bhagwat's *Holkar Patra-vyavahar*, First half, pt 1, Nos 76 and 77. Thakur, ii 57. Kharé, xiv Nos 6465-6471. *Holkar Kaifiyat* pp 91-95.

named Ensign Douglas, and a vagrant Frenchman, Monsieur Honore* Above all, there was no general on Sindhia's side who could even distantly approach the supreme military genius of Jaswant Rao Holkar In gun power, Sindhia had only 80 pieces against 100 or more of Holkar

In Sindhia's army, the four battalions of Sutherland's brigade under Captain Dawes, formed the right of the centre, with the seven battalions of Ambāji Inglé led by Qalb Ali Khan, on his left, and the guns in front The left wing was composed of the Deccan cavalry under Sadāshiv Bhāskar the Bakhshi On the right, at some distance apart, stood the Peshwā's four battalions "commanded by natives," with 6,000 disorderly cavalry The city of Punā protected their rear

On Holkar's right wing, at the northern end of the line was Mir Khan with his famous Pathan horse and foot, and then his battle line was continued southwards by the brigades of Colonel Harding (4 battalions), Vickers (five), Dod (three), and Armstrong (four) The left wing was formed by Fath Singh Māné's war-seasoned musketeers and horsemen and his comrade Shahāmat Khan's Pathan horde, whose name struck terror throughout Mahārāshtra The second line of Holkar was formed by a sea of indigenous cavalry, popularly estimated at one lakh of men,—again counting from the right (or north end) to the left, in this order,—Mir Khan, Ruhela and Bangash mercenaries, the family contingent of the Holkars (Khandé fauj), the Deccani cavalry under Nago Shivāji Shenvi, the Hindustani horse (mostly Muslim) under Bhawāni Shankar Bakhshi, and Māné's own mounted troops Behind the second line, on the right of the centre, Jaswant Rao Holkar sat on horseback on a hillock, surrounded by his personal guards (*huzurāt*) and surveyed the changing tide of battle, with his one eye which missed no part of the field

* Misspelt as *Honove* in the *As An Reg* But Wellington's despatches spell the name of a surrendering French officer of Sindhia as *Honore*

The action began about half past nine in the morning, when fire was opened from Sindhia's side Again, Jaswant Holkar acted the part of the loyal subject He told his gunners, "The Peshwā's flag is the emblem of my sovereign Up to twenty-five discharges of his guns, you must withhold your fire" After counting 25 shots from the Punā army, he replied with his guns and there was a brisk exchange of shot and shell for three hours, during which eight thousand balls are said to have been fired

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the battle lines came closer together. Dawes advanced with his battalions and for a time pushed his opponents back At the same time Mir Khan, imagining that the enemy horse before him had been "softened" by the long cannonade, delivered a charge upon them, but the Pathan horsemen were severely cut up by the incessant discharge of grape from De Boigne's veteran artillery Seizing this moment Sadāshiv's massed squadrons fell upon the disordered Pathan ranks with fatal effect "In the confusion no one knew where he was, the slaughter was great, and signs of flight began to appear in our ranks," as Mir Khan's biographer describes the scene

But there were two generals in Holkar's army who knew how to snatch victory out of the jaws of imminent defeat Colonel Harding with his brigade advanced to the rescue of his party's cavalry By superior numbers and incomparably superior leadership he shook Qalb Ali's brigade which guarded the right flank of the Sindhian cavalry At the same moment, Jaswant Rao himself, swiftly taking in the crisis of the battle, dashed down from his mound of observation with the handful of silahdār cavalry he could gather round himself, and rushed to the thick of the battle Cutting down Sindhia's gunners with his sword, himself receiving four wounds in his arm, he fell upon the battalions of Qalb Ali Khan behind the guns, "like a tiger on a herd of deer" These men, already thrown into disorder by the steady fire of Harding's infantry, now scattered before

Holkar's rush like chaff before the wind The Sindhian cavalry, seeing the progress of the enemy's counter attack had already taken to flight, and thus Sindhia's left wing and left centre ceased to exist

Long before that, even his right wing had vanished As soon as the general cannonade ceased, and the lines set moving forward, the Peshwā's contingent, without stopping to strike a blow or even draw their swords, fled away with breathless speed. Advancing towards them was Fath Singh Māné, whose face they had not ventured to look at on the plains of Dond and Bārāmati The craven defenders of Punā joined their still more craven master, by way of the Gol Tikri and the Pārvati hill Bāji Rao had been invited to enjoy from a safe distance the fine spectacle of his army destroying the proud rebel from Indore He had sat on his elephant near Ghāsirām's tank and gazed at the battle for two hours at noon, and then set the first example of flight to his men

One man had changed the fate of the battle Sindhia's left, right, and rear were all swept clear by this time Myriads of horsemen from Holkar's second line and two wings swarmed round Sindhia's remaining infantry, whose cavalry support had now vanished But though surrounded by a raging sea of exultant enemy squadrons, and attacked in front by a four-fold strength of disciplined infantry, the four battalions of De Boigne's old army, under Dawes, offered a desperate resistance to the end They tried to make an orderly retreat by fighting rearguard actions But the numbers were hopelessly against them Three out of their four European officers were killed, and six hundred men out of their total strength of 1,400, lay killed or wounded At last Nature came to their ruin Some tumbrils of munition in their midst were exploded by cannon-balls, and the havoc and confusion which this caused destroyed the last chance of resistance They broke in flight and were mercilessly cut down The only European officer left, Mons. Honore, retreated with the colours of the corps to Mahadji

Sindhia's mansions at Wanowri, but was there invested and forced to surrender

Sindhia's army lost five thousand men in killed and wounded, all their guns, and the whole of their camp and baggage. In the force of the Vinchur-kar* sardār of the Peshwā, three hundred men were slain and about the same number wounded Holkar's casualties numbered 1,600, including Col Harding, who was fatally wounded by one of the last shots fired, and Vickers wounded †

§ 8 *Punā after the battle of Hadapsar*

It was a decisive victory for Holkar, in one day Sindhia's paramount power and prestige were destroyed beyond repair The Maratha capital and its master lay prostrate before the victor The news of the defeat came to Sindhia in Ujjain as a stunning blow, his courtiers cried out, "Our forces in the Deccan, both trained infantry and indigenous cavalry, have been totally ruined The entire Peshwāi has come to an end" "In Punā the naked eye could see that destruction had fallen on Sindhia's army, and no part of it has been spared"

When the tide of battle showed the first sign of turning against them, the camp followers and tradesmen of Sindhia's army made a rush into Punā for safety But the ruffians of the city attacked and robbed them of all that they were carrying Even the fugitive soldiers of the broken army found no shelter in the capital of the prince who had called

* Kharé, xiv 6471 Narsingh Khanderao Vinchurkar (called Ānvā), the grandson of that Vithal Shivdev, who had served so well in Mahādji Sindhia's campaigns in Rajputana but was not an officer of Sindhia's service For his history, *PRC* vii No 249

† The casualties—The first report gave Sindhia's losses as "upwards of three thousand men fallen in the action, and Holkar's loss about one thousand" A British officer of Holkar's army (L F Smith) from the best information he could obtain, computed at least 5,000 killed and wounded on Sindhia's side and about one third of that number on Holkar's (*As An Reg* for 1803) The Maratha news-writers in Puna at first gave highly inflated figures, which were later reduced to 2,000 killed and 5,000 wounded on both sides taken together, an underestimate (Kharé, xiv 6468 and 6470) A later report from Punā states "From the head of Bhavānipeth to that of Raviwār, three thousand men of Sindhia were killed"—a more likely figure (*Ibid* No 6471)

them to his aid; they were stripped of their arms, dress and money by the Punā people, and driven out into the fields. Sindhia's disciplined infantrymen were all North Indians by race, Rajputs and Hindustani Muslims; in Maratha eyes they were foreigners (*pardeshis*) and hence, in their hour of woe no one in Punā lent them a helping hand, no one even had pity for their wounded; they were refused food and shelter, stripped of their all, and left to perish in the streets like dogs. As the agent of the Southern jagirdārs observes, "Such a bad time has come to Sindhia's soldiers that today they can find no saviour (*trātā*); none even gave them a place in which to lie down."

Throughout that eventful day, while the clash of arms sounded from the eastern plain, the citizens of Punā lay crouching in their homes, tremblingly waiting for the sack that was sure to follow, whichever side won. The ferocious Pathans of Holkar and the villainous Pindharis of Sindhia were equally a menace to that masterless city. All day long no fire was lighted in any kitchen; all ears were kept open for the news from the battlefield. It was the day of the Feast of Lamps (*Dipāvali*) according to the Hindu calendar; to the Punā population it proved a very merry Dipāvali indeed, as the Patwardhan's local agent wrote in the bitterness of his heart.

But their fears were belied. Jaswant Rao's iron discipline succeeded in keeping his licentious horde of followers outside Punā, and no man there was robbed, no woman molested. He had proclaimed that if any of his soldiers entered the city of Punā or robbed even a *cowri*, the offender would be disembowelled and his body publicly exposed. He reserved the city for the more profitable game of squeezing the rich for heavy ransoms.

* The holy Brāhman newswriter in Punā exults in the debacle of Sindhia's army—"Nothing is wanting to complete Sindhia's destruction. It is a fit retribution for the misdeeds of his Pindharis, who for some weeks before had ravaged the country round, allowed none to escape from the city to the villages, and broken the stone idol of Theur." (*Kharé*, xiv. 6465. Gulgule, 7 Nov.)

§ 9 *Ruin of the Maratha Homeland*

The war transferred to Maharashtra proper this year inflicted unspeakable misery on the people A letter from Ujjain, written on 21st July 1802, says, "Holkar's horsemen are in the Ahmadnagar district In Desh all the cities have been devastated and the peasants are being subjected to extreme oppression" The same tale is told in two letters of 22nd August and 21th October "Holkar's *fauj* are perpetrating a deluge (*pralay*) by extorting blackmail. The famine is extreme The ryots have none to save them" (Gulgulé D)

C 25 June 1802—Holkar's advanced division, on the north bank of the Godāvari, is levying ransom, looting east and west, digging up the floors of houses, they have left nothing standing Men are fleeing away from the track before Holkar's troops

5 Sept—Mir Khan is at Tokā-tirtha, where he greatly oppressed Brāhmans and Brāhman women, extorted money, and took away hostages for ransom (Kharé, xiv. 6423)

13 Sept—Jaswant Holkar came to Nāsik, invested it, divided the city by barriers, and confining the well-to-do to their houses without food or drink, is demanding forty lakhs as ransom They offered him four lakhs, but he replied, "Pay down forty lakhs, or else I shall first sack your holy city and then set fire to it" The people said, "We are present before you, our men, children, houses and city are at your disposal Do what your heart desires" . Seizing the well-to-do householders in the villages of this district, he has brought them to his camp, and is beating them for exacting money Fath Singh Māné has occupied Rasin, Bhosen, and Kārkomb, and is beating the *kārkun* for securing ransom At Kārkomb no man was spared, the habitations have been depopulated. Mangavidé was subjected to the same fate as Kārkomb" (Kh xiv. 6427, 6433)

2 Oct—The Pathan's soldiers came to Khed on the Bhimā (24 m n of Punā), where they did much destruction

and slew one Brāhman and a woman . . Punā is breaking up, every one is fleeing where he can No pony or litter can be had in the city.

8 Oct.—Khed on the Bhimā was very much devastated for opposing the Pathans; the Brāhmans were severely beaten; women were beaten, one woman and one Brahman were killed Punā city has been greatly upset For two days the barriers were closed (*nākė bandi*) and none was allowed to leave A pony's hire is one Rupee per *kos*, and even at this rate one is hardly available; a litter (*doli*) costs Rs 45. All the three roads are filled with fugitives. (*Ibid* 6110, '45)

The British Resident, Col Close wrote from Punā on 19th October,—"The Pindharis of both the armies lay waste the adjacent districts I cannot describe the melancholy scene which this place at present exhibits The assessments on the city are carried on with so much vigour that the inhabitants fly towards the neighbouring hills, in the hope of securing their property On the road they are generally met by the Pindharis, who plunder and abuse them, and send them back empty" (*PRC* x 65)

The Kotā agent in Punā, writing next day, tells the same sad tale —"Punā is going to be totally devastated. Here rice is dear and (sometimes) cannot be had (at any price). The deluge that has overwhelmed the Deccan still continues God does not let us see how mankind is to survive" (Gulgulé D)

Such is civil war, miscalled conquest For six months after Jaswant Rao Holkar's coming south, the Desh districts of Maharashtra lay prostrate under the heels of ruthless invaders As the many hordes of Holkar's horsemen spread out like fans, their lines of advance could be known from afar by the flocks of vultures hovering over the dust clouds that hid these swarms of human locusts Before them for many miles the roads were blocked by frantic crowds of men and women fleeing away to escape death, torture and outrage, abandoning their homes and fields Behind the invaders

were left only burning villages, ravished women, desecrated temples, polluted Brāhmans, mutilated corpses, and the living skeletons of the famished Nothing green could be seen standing on the face of the earth.

This was exactly the sight presented by the Maratha penetration into other provinces of India A reflective historian can see only a vindication of divine justice in the Punā Brāhmans and their hireling soldiery now feeling in their own homes what they had done to other peoples of the same land of the Hindus The wages of sin is death for tribes no less than for individuals

Jaswant Rao's invasion brought down on Mahārāshtra a still greater curse than the desolation of fields and the slaughter of men The last fruit of civil war is the loss of national liberty, and Holkar's triumph made the Peshwā an English vassal On 25th October, even before the battle joined outside Punā, Bāji Rāo had secretly sent to Resident Close a written agreement* to cede lands worth 25 lakhs of Rupees a year in return for a British protective force of six battalions of sepoys to be permanently stationed in his dominions. That afternoon, abandoning his capital long before the Sindhian army had ceased to resist, the last of the Peshwās fled to Konkan, wandered about for some weeks to avoid Holkar's pursuing bands, and at last took refuge in an English ship, which landed him at their port of Bassein on 6th December 1802 Here, on the last day of the year he signed the Treaty of Bassein, by which he acknowledged British overlordship in full. It was now the lawful duty of the E I Company to restore Bāji Rao to his throne in Punā, which city was then in Holkar's

* Earlier proposal of the Peswā to the Resident, in *Asiatic Annual Register for 1804*, State Papers, pp 68-70 (secret midnight interview with Resident Close on 17 April 1802) Proposal of 25 Oct *Ibid* p 79 Marquis Wellesley's reply, *Ibid* p 80 He insists on the Peshwā making himself a British vassal (like the Nawāb Wazir and the Nizām) and objects to the proposal of a mere defensive alliance as between equals He carried this point at Bassein For Treaty of Bassein, full text in *Wellesley Despatches*, iii 627-631 *As An Register for 1803*, State Papers, pp 7-13

occupation and where the victor had set up Amrit Rao Raghunāth as Peshwā in the place of Bāji Rao, whose flight to foreign parts was deemed as equivalent to abdication British forces, under the leadership of the future Duke of Wellington entered Punā on 20th April 1803, and Bāji Rao was brought back and formally restored to his throne as a British puppet on 13th May, exactly like Mir Jafar who had been seated on the *masnad* of Bengal by Clive on 29th June 1757 *

* Resident Close to Governor-General —"The Peshwā has expressed his hope that his restoration to the *masnad* may be proclaimed by salutes at the different places in the British possessions in India" [*PRC* vii 67]

CHAPTER XLVI

DELHI PROVINCE, THE SIKHS, AND GEORGE THOMAS

§ 1 *Administrative divisions of North India under Sindhia*

When Mahādji Sindhia left North India for Punā at the beginning of 1792, he arranged for the administration of the Marātha dependencies in Hindustan during his absence by giving to each of his agents the charge of a particular province Excluding Rajputana, where the Marāthas had only claims to tribute either for the Emperor or for their own sardārs, but no right to land, and Bundelkhand where they interfered only to profit by the eternal family quarrels among the fifty descendants of Chhatra Sāl Bundelā, —there were six regions in which the Marāthas held territorial jurisdiction, though nominally subject to the paramountcy of the Mughal Emperor

The first of these was *Delhi* city, which included the Emperor's palace and family and a certain undefined area round the capital But this area was very much smaller than the old subah of Delhi as known under Akbar's rule. The second was the *Pānipat* region, which was blocked on the north (and west) by a wall of Sikh opposition gradually hardening round Patiālā The third was the district known as *Hariānā* or the country north and west of Delhi, and stretching up to the frontiers of the Mācheri and Jaipur kingdoms, in the Narnaul-Shekhāwati districts of the Kachhwā State

The fourth province was the Upper Doāb, popularly called the *Mirāt-Sāharanpur* district, where Holkar's agents were obstructing the intrusion of Sindhiā's collectors The fifth was the Middle Doāb, with its centre at *Koil* (Aligarh), which, together with certain villages west of the Jamunā and south of Delhi formed the *jāgir* of De Boigne, yielding

a total revenue now increased to 35 lakhs of rupees *Mālwā,* though situated north of the Narmadā lay south of the Chambal river, and was therefore not regarded as a part of Hindustan proper Nor was it included in the geography of the Deccan, but its ancient capital Ujjain was also Sindhiā's official capital

During the twelve years that lay between Mahādji's departure from the North and the imposition of Pax Britannica (1792-1803), all these regions were in a fluid unsettled condition, their boundaries were always shifting, and their administration disturbed by invasion, rebellion or brigandage I shall tell their history during this period in broad outline only, and spare the reader the sickening details of the universal anarchy spread over so many diverse places

§ 2 *Shāh Nizāmuddin, Sindhiā's Resident in Delhi*

Mahādji Sindhiā when appointed Regent of the Mughal Empire, had to place a representative of his own at Delhi, in order to enforce his policy at the imperial Court and manage the Emperor The duties of this officer were far more difficult and required far higher qualities for their smooth discharge than those of a British Resident in a feudatory Indian State Only a man gifted with extraordinary intelligence, diplomatic tact, and combined strength of character and patience, could have served the needs of Sindhiā at the Delhi Court in those troubled early days of political change, and it was Sindhiā's misfortune that he could find no agent of such a character

Anand Rao Narsi Yerulkar who used to carry Mahādji's messages to the Emperor from 1780 to 1786, proved the reverse of the required diplomatic agent In a drunken frolic during the Holi festival of March 1786, he gave mortal offence to Shah Alam by parading through the Marātha camp an old man and a boy, dressed out in rags and tinsel ornaments to caricature the pauper Emperor and his favourite daughter Mahādji's son-in-law Lādoji Sitolé

who was next sent to Delhi (in August 1786) as the Maratha Resident, proved a failure by reason of his lack of spirit, he ran away from the capital as soon as he heard of Mahādji's repulse at Lālsot (August 1787). Then came the interruption of Ghulām Qādir's ascendancy. After Mahādji had recovered his supremacy, he appointed in August 1789 a man whom he knew to be a *persona grata* with the Emperor and who he hoped would prove a moulder of Muslim opinion in the capital. This man was Shāh Nizāmuddin.

Shāh Nizām-ud-din (popularly known as Shāhji, and also by his family title *Hazratji* or "His Holiness"), was descended on his father's side from the celebrated Bāghdād saint Sayyid Muhiuddin Abdul Qādir Jilāni al-Hasani al-Husaini (d. 561 A.H.) from whom he was 18th in direct line. His mother was a daughter of another Islamic saint Khwājah Bāqi-billah of Delhi. His family migrated from Bāghdād to Burhānpur in the middle of the 17th century, and two generations later removed to Delhi. At the Mughal capital they used to give spiritual instruction to the people who were drawn by the report of their learning, piety and miraculous powers. Their disciples were wont to salute them as *Khudā-numā*, or the Revealer of God to man. In time their modest hermitage one mile outside the Agra Gate of Shah Jahān's capital, grew into a baronial mansion with extensive gardens and out-houses (described by T. Twining in his *Travels*, 225-228.)

The Emperor Shah Alam II in his devotion to all *mullās* and *faqirs* highly honoured Nizām-ud-din and cherished him at his Court. So great was his belief in the intelligence and zeal of this priest that he used to employ him from 1783 onwards as his agent in diplomatic missions to Sindhiā's Marātha envoys accredited to his Court.

The choice of Shāhji as his own Resident at the Delhi darbār was forced on Mahādji by his want of a capable Marātha agent. Shāhji's merit lay in his spiritual influence over the weak-minded Emperor and the expected obedience of the people of the capital to such a generally respected

personage. This hold of Shāhji on Mahādji Sindhiā was made doubly strong when the holy man married his son Amin Muhammad Khan to the grand-daughter of Sindhia's Muslim *guru*, Shāh Mansur of Bir

Shāh Nizām-ud-din was Sindhiā's subahdar of Delhi from August 1789 till June 1796, when he was removed.* But his long tenure of this office had the most unhappy consequences for Sindhiā's interests Like a typical *darvesh*, Shāhji professed contempt for riches, while at the same time his greed for all moneys that came within his reach was boundless As he pretended to have renounced wealth and to have vowed to live on alms of the smallest currency, namely a *cowrie* or Cypraean shell paid by each of his votaries, he was nicknamed the *Cowrie Faqir* He laid out a new garden of his own by encroaching on some plots of land belonging to the Emperor and prince Akbar, and said that it was done with Sindhia's permission!

We must remember that Shāh Nizām-ud-din as Sindhiā's deputy exercised only civil and diplomatic control over the Delhi province, though he bore the title of *Subahdār* or governor But the military control of Delhi *fort* was entrusted to a Hindu officer, who was independent of Shahji, with the result that the two constantly quarrelled and each served as a check on the other After Sindhia's recovery of Delhi fort in October 1788, Raja Hirā Singh of the Jāt ruling family of Ballabhgarh, was placed in Delhi as the qiladār † His kinsman Ajit Singh did the duties of

* In June 1796 Jaswant Rao Sindhiā (a great-grandson of Ranoji) became subahdār of Delhi after the dismissal of Shāhji, but Daulat Rao Sindhia replaced him by Shāh Haji, a personal servant or *Khawas* of Prince Akbar Shah on 5th Feb 1797 In May 1798 Nizām-ud-din (through his son) was reappointed by Sindhia to his old post and held it till July 1801 On 6th Oct 1799 Prince Akbar and some other sons of Shāh Alam seized Nizām-ud-din, gave him a beating, and kept him confined in the fort for some days, after which he was released The subahdāri was next given to Perron who held it till the British conquest Perron discharged the duties of this office through his deputy Drugeon (his first choice, M Bernier having been found incompetent) *DY DC*. ***PRC*** viii 177, 178 ix 257, 27

† For this Ballabhgarh Jat dynasty, see *Agra and Calcutta Gazetteer* (pub 1842) pt ii p 289 *Delhi Dist Gazetteer*, 213 Hira Singh and Ajit S were joint qiladārs Ajit S was murdered by his brother Zālim

the post. On 21st August 1791, Khāndé Rao Hari took over charge as the new *qiladar*, but he had very soon to go away on campaign (1st September), leaving Kumār Bhawani Singh to hold the fort, and this Bhawāni Singh, continued as qiladār for six years after, and had the inevitable friction with Shāhji. Lakhwā Dādā, after being appointed Daulat Rao's viceroy of Hindustan, recognised Kumār Bhawāni Singh (*alias* Mān S., according to *D C.*) as qiladār of Delhi (27 May 1795). On 24th December, 1796, Mān Singh was dismissed and Bhāu Tātyā (Lakhwā's partisan) appointed to the post, from whom Pedron, by order of Perron, captured the fort of Delhi on 11th October 1798. Perron's officer Louis Bourquien commanded in Delhi up to the British conquest in September 1803. (*DY.* ii. 30, 25. Kāle *Ikh.* DC.)

§ 3. *How Shāh Nizāmuddin starved the Emperor.*

A friend of General De Boigne, in a letter written from Delhi to Colonel John Murray about July 1794, thus describes Shāhji's scurvy treatment of his imperial ward :—

"Sindhia sets Shāh Nizām-ud-din over the Pādishāh as the greatest scoundrel they could find. He does not give a farthing of money to the Pādishāh or any of his people . . Regularly every day he furnishes the old king with two *seers* of *pilau* and eight *seers* of meat, this with two loaves of bread, about the length each of a cubit, to suffice for five persons,—(namely the Emperor, his doctor, Prince Akbar Shah, a little favourite daughter, and one of his 200 *begams* in turn.) The rest of the royal household, without distinction, Princes and Princesses, nay Queens and all eunuchs and female slaves, have two *seers* a day of barley flour for every three persons, which they are to bake for themselves. . . . The old Nizām of Hyderabad sent the King six years ago 6,000 gold *mohars*. They every farthing got into the Cowrie Father's hands, and remain there."

S., on 20 April 1795, when his son Bahadur S. succeeded him. Bhawāni evidently bore the title of Kumar Bahadur or Bahadur S. (corrected from *DC.* and Kāle *Akh.*)

De Boigne's reply written on 12th March 1795, though discounting a part of the above picture as "somewhat exaggerated," confirms the story of Shāhji's greed He writes —"The province (*i e*, *jāgir*) in Shāhji's possession intended for the support of the royal family may produce about seven lakhs *per annum* Shāhji takes the greatest part of it for himself, and a great deal must be given to the Marātha chiefs, to be supported and continued in his office" [Compton, 83-86]

Nizām-ud-din's peculation of his sovereign's dues was made more unpalatable by his harshness of speech In pontifical pride, heightened by his consciousness of power as the confidant of the Emperor's regent, this Cowrie Faqir addressed Shah Alam and his sons with a roughness of tongue which moved the helpless Emperor to tears and the young princes to ill-suppressed rage The Marātha despatches from Delhi again and again describe Shāhji as *sakht-go* or harsh of speech, and the Persian news-letters repeatedly mention his chiding of the royal family

§ 4 *Shah Alam's vices*

But even if Shah Nizām-ud-din had possessed the suavity and patience of an angel, it would have been impossible for him to keep Shah Alam satisfied with his management Sordid avarice and boundless sensuality had disgraced the character of Shah Alam ever since his return to Delhi after leaving British protection at Allahabad in 1771 He kept the swarm of princes and princesses confined in the palace-prison of Delhi fort on starvation allowances, and at the same time constantly added new beauties to his over-crowded harem This was noticed by Comte de Modave in 1775 And neither age nor blindness had cooled the flames of passion in his blood after Ghulām Qādir's atrocities

This highly cultured French administrator, the Comte de Modave, who visited the imperial Court in 1775, writes of Shah Alam II

"He has been seized with a sordid avarice, which has

gone beyond all bounds This monarch has two qualities which seem hereditary in his house he is marvellously devout and very much given to women He passes his life in their midst, having no less than 500 in his seraglio I have seen him surrounded by *faqirs* and *mullās* These *mullās* leap up, dance, turn on their feet, their arms in the air, with a prodigious rapidity and make a hundred other extravagant acts . Sometimes the *mullās* approach his person extending their arms in front of them, their fists pressed one against the other The Pādishāh rises up, applies his hands to the fists of the *mullās*, and then passes his hands, sanctified by that touch, to his face and to his beard with a seriousness which gives me a great desire to laugh

"The Pādishah at present has 27 male children all alive and swarming It is reckoned that today in the fortress of Delhi there are more than 80 Shāhzāda prisoners, who are all provided with wives and most of them with children . Some of these Shāhzādas have only one rupee a day as subsistence allowance, others have two, three, four or five All these princes of the blood imperial lead an extremely unhappy life, the money destined for their subsistence is not always regularly paid"

Three years later the gifted Swiss engineer Major Polier, during a long residence in Delhi, noticed the same thing "Great fondness of flattery and too unreserved confidence in his ministers, . together with an inordinate love of women and a strong propensity to ease and indolence, form the less shining parts of Shah Alam's character The King has a numerous family, above 500 women and nearly 70 children, male and female, besides grand-children" In 1801, when Lord Wellesley took over the charge of the Emperor from Sindhia's hands, he had to make provision for 15 children, male and female, of Shah Alam II then surviving, besides grand children *

* Modave, tr by me in *Islamic Culture*, July 1937 Polier in P C Gupta's *Shah Alam II and His Court*, 69-70 Wellesley, in his despatch dated 2 Jan 1805 (*Delhi Dist Gaz* p 22)

§ 5 *Causes of Shah Alam's poverty—his domestic discords*

A royal family which bred with the fecundity of rabbits, needed an ever-increasing supply of money The anarchy then raging all over the country reduced the actual collection from the Crownlands to less than a quarter of the standard revenue, while the blind old patriarch persisted in building up a secret hoard by laying aside some portion of the scanty sums that he every year received for his support. The inevitable result was beggarliness, starvation, and clamorous outbursts in the Delhi palace which never ceased till the British conquest

At the beginning of 1789, immediately after the hunting down of Ghulām Qādir, Mahādji supplied the Emperor with Rs 300 a day in order to meet his immediate wants This was a purely temporary arrangement Soon afterwards permanent provision was made for the imperial household by assigning 32 mahals as *khālsa* with a net yield on paper of Rs 16,91,000 a year, and these estates were farmed to contractors The Emperor's monthly allowance having been fixed at Rs 1,30,000, the revenue of these Crownlands could have provided the annually needed amount of 15½ lakhs, if the collections were normal But the times were not normal, and the actual realisation from the farmers sank to four lakhs, that is, only a quarter of the expected revenue Hence the imperial family had to live on quarter rations, or less, because a portion of the shrunken receipts was swallowed up by their keeper Shāh Nizāmuddin Under British peace and British management, the actual collection from these Crownlands leaped up from four lakhs in 1807 to 15 lakhs in 1813 The Jamunā canals, which when assigned to Safdar Jang in 1750 used to yield 25 lakhs a year, were now choked up and unprofitable (*DY* i 384, and 387, Kaye's *Metcalfe*, i, 365 *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1800, Misc Tr p. 37, Polier, on the canal)

But a shrunken income, made doubly painful by his growing miserliness, was not the only trouble in Shah Alam's

household after his restoration to the throne. The polygamist was not happy with his numerous progeny. Soon after making Mahādji his regent, he had approached that chief and the English Government with a proposal for setting aside the claims of his eldest son Jawān Bakht and declaring a younger son Akbar Shah as his heir. The reason was the superstitious belief that as the fugitive and peniless Shah Alam had learnt of his father's death and crowned himself Emperor (on 23rd Dec 1759), while Akbar was in his mother's womb, this prince was born under the most auspicious star and he would bring glory to the imperial house if he filled the throne. But the Governor-General and Sindhia alike refused to violate the rule of primogeniture. The question, however, was finally laid at rest by the death of Jawan Bakht in self-chosen exile at Benares on 31st May 1788.

After Shah Alam had been rescued from the hands of the Ruhelā rebel, it was agitated in some political circles that, as blindness had now made him physically unfit to rule, he should be pensioned off, and Prince Akbar publicly installed as his heir in full possession of the powers of government. That prince was naturally eager for such a promotion. And then his father's love for him turned into hate. Shah Alam refused to part with his power and wealth and sounded the Marātha Court about declaring a still younger son his heir!

The sons and nephews of Shah Alam, being driven to despair by their very niggardly allowances and the utter blankness of their future, one after another broke out of their prison-palace in Delhi and escaped to Oudh, the Deccan or Afghanistan.* These escapades created at the

* Escapes from Delhi palace,—Jawān Bakht (14 April 1784), Mirzāi, a Khwājāzāda descended from the daughter of Emperor Farrukh-siyar (25 Nov 1789), Āhsan Bakht (when following the funeral procession of Empress Piyāri Begam, 4 Apr 1790), Sulaiman Shukoh (c March 1789), Sikandar Shukoh (on 22nd January, 1796). Similarly, two sons of Jawan Bakht left their home in Benares, namely Shigufta Bakht or Mirza Hāji and Muzaffar Bakht or Mirza Juma, *PRC* i 243, 255, *DC DY* i & ii Kālé *Akh*.)

time some alarm and confusion but no real harm came out of them

In despair of arguing Shah Nizāmuddin into greater liberality or honesty in payment, the Emperor once or twice wrote secret appeals to the British Resident with Sindhia to Sindhiā himself, to the Peshwā and the Durrāni Shāh, begging them to relieve his misery Similarly Prince Akbar sent a secret complaint against Nizāmuddin to General De Boigne, the most influential officer of Sindhiā The correspondence came to Nizāmuddin's knowledge and he sharply censured the king and the prince for this defiance of his authority as Sindhiā's agent and the sole medium of communication between the Delhi Court and the outer world The trump card that the Cowrie Faqir could always put before Sindhia's inner council was the argument that such unauthorised diplomacy would enable "the English to thrust their feet into the Government of Delhi,' and make the Pādishāh their vassal like the Nawāb of Oudh

§ 6 *Sindhia's friendly treaty with the Sikhs fails*

Mahādji Sindhiā after gaining the regency of the Delhi Empire, tried to come to an understanding with the Sikhs who had been dominating the Cis-Satlaj portion of the Delhi subah and raiding the upper Doab every year (Ch 35, § 8) On 9th May 1785, a treaty of alliance with them was concluded, the mediators being Ambāji Inglé on the Maratha side and Mohan Singh and Dulchā Singh on behalf of the Sikh sardārs Its terms were, (i) The Sikh sardārs were to join the imperial army with a contingent of 5,000 horse and receive in return a *jāgir* of ten lakhs of Rupees (in the Karnāl district), (ii) They undertook not to disturb the territory outside the limits of their *jāgir*, nor to levy *rākhi* (blackmail) in any possession of the imperial Government But the Sikhs did not abide by the terms, and they could be hardly expected to do so when we bear in mind their anarchical organisation under hundreds of petty captains, with no central authority to unite them or control their

individual predatory activities. The boundary between the two powers was roughly a line west to east through Karnal on the right bank of the Jamuna and another line through Shāmpur—Muzaffarnagar—Mirat, on the left bank.

Before the year 1785 was out, the Sikhs were already in open hostility to the Marātha administration of the north Delhi district. In December the Marātha governor had to fight and drive away the Sikh bands that had invaded Patiālā, the dominion of Sahib Singh, an ally of the Marathas. But Sikh raids into the upper Doab and the north Delhi district, for collecting *rakhi* (two annas for every Rupee of the land revenue) continued during 1786 and 1787. Baghel Singh of Chhalundi was the first Sikh chief to join Sindhiā's general for pay. But Mahādji's call on the Sikh jāgirdārs in the Cis-Satlaj country to pay the tribute due to the sovereign antagonised them. Then came the Lālsot campaign in the middle of 1787 and the consequent downfall of Sindhiā's authority, which continued till December 1788.

When Ambāji Inglé left Karnāl in June 1787 to join his master at Lālsot, his deputy Shyām Rao Bakhshi held charge of the north-Delhi district in name only and could save himself from the swarming Sikh allies of Ghulām Qādir and the treacherous Bāghel Singh only with the help of Begam Samru's troops. During Ghulām Qādir's ascendancy, the Sikhs professed to be his allies, but plundered his estates as ruthlessly as the imperial dominions.

After the downfall of the Ruhelā usurper, early in 1789, strong Marātha forces gathered at Kunjpura for restoring their authority in the Cis-Satlaj area and forming an alliance with the Raja of Patiālā and other local chiefs so as to keep the trans-Satlaj Sikhs out and ensure peace for the imperial territory there and in the upper Doāb by legalising the Sikh right to levy *rākhi*. But the plan failed; the new Marātha governor pressed the Raja of Patiālā to pay his promised tribute, and the Raja met the demand by inviting the trans-Satlaj Sikhs who came and enveloped the Marātha

army. Peace was then made by Sindhia granting a large *jagir* to Baghel Singh in return for his undertaking to keep his associate Sikh chiefs friendly to the Marātha Government. "Some of the Sikh chiefs accepted the role of peaceful feudatories (under the Marāthas). .... They undertook the fiscal management of certain parganas in the Doāb allotted to the maintenance of Sikh contingents. In other words, feudal tenures were bestowed upon them in commutation of their claim to blackmail." Several Sikh chiefs now held estates in the Upper Doāb. They all agreed to protect the Doab from their own retainers and the attacks of other Sikhs. About 1,000 Sikh collectors were allowed to be stationed in the Doāb to realise *rākhi* from the villages, and the Marātha officers helped them in this business. In fact "by this course of policy the Government gave a varnish of legality to a system of exaction that could not be wholly suppressed." (Gupta, ii 222, with quotations from Williams in *Calcutta Review*, 1875.)

But even this surrender did not bring peace to that unhappy country. The Sikhs would not keep their word. A year had not passed after this agreement, when Sikh bands renewed their raids into the territories under Marātha rule. For many years afterwards a fluid state of anarchy and plunder continued in these regions. In short, Sikh raids were an annual occurrence in the Doāb every winter till the British conquest. The sickening details may be read in Atkinson's *N.W.P. Gazetteer*, vol. III (Muzaffarnagar) or Dr. Hari Ram Gupta's *History of the Sikhs*, vol. II, Ch. 13 and 14. It will be enough to trace the course of events in outline here.

§ 7. *Marātha dealings with Patiālā and other Sikhs*

It was in the best interest of the Marāthas to make some great local chief like the Raja of Patiālā their firm friend and use him as a buffer against the swarming Sikh hordes further west. But this wise policy, which the English

instinctively adopted in the 19th century, could not be followed. Whenever Patiala was threatened by Sikh confederacies from beyond the Satlaj, or disturbed by domestic quarrels, the Raja used to invite the Marathas; and as certainly, when the invaders retired, he evaded paying the promised price of the aid. A chronic source of friction was Sindhia's demand for the annual tribute which Patiala, like every other feudatory State, owed to the Emperor and which Sindhia, as regent, had to collect. Whenever the Marathas used threats, the Patiala diwan or queen immediately called in the trans-Satlaj Sikhs and expelled the weak Maratha forces. No lasting solution of this problem could be reached. Rather, this public dispute was made worse by the private greed of the Maratha generals in the north Delhi district.

When Mahadji Sindhia left North India for the Deccan (early in 1792), his governor of Hindustan, Gopal Bhau, strengthened his posts in the Upper Doab; he himself marched up from his base at Mathura to Delhi (7th March), and appointed two senior officers, Ravloji Sindhia and Madho Rao Phalké, to the Doab to guard it against the Sikhs. This Maratha viceroy had a new and powerful engine of war in De Boigne's disciplined brigades, and after he had taken post at Sonpat (*c.* 17th April 1792), the Sikhs were kept in awe for some time.

In October 1793, a Sikh predatory band was driven away from the neighbourhood of Saharanpur by Devji Gaulé and Bapu Malhar. Khandé Rao Hari expelled another band of raiders from the north of Delhi. But the Maratha generals had constantly to wage small wars in order to collect revenue from the walled villages and petty Nawabs of the whole country north and west of Delhi.

Mahadji's policy was "to win the Sikhs over by goodwill and a policy of conciliation, and thus establish peace and order in North India by the active co-operation of the Sikhs." But in the anarchical condition of the Sikh bands, such a policy could not work, as "they understood only the argument of physical force."

After Mahādji Sindhiā's death (in February 1794), his northern viceroy Gopāl Bhāu posted Bhairon Pant Tātya at Sāharanpur, Devji Gaulé and Bāpu Malhār at Pānipat, Jivāji Ballāl and Ambāji Inglé at Sambhal, and Āpā Khāndé Rao (in charge of the Delhi district) at Jhajhar. The mutual jealousies of these officers and the mutiny of their troops from the chronic arrears of their pay, prevented Marātha rule from taking root and the country from returning to peace and prosperity. Begam Samru's disciplined brigade and solvent finances, however, awed the Sikh raiders into sparing her estates in the Upper Doāb for some years.

In November 1794, Daulat Rao Sindhiā made Lakhwā Dādā his viceroy of the north in the place of Gopāl Bhāu, and at the end of the next year De Boigne left Sindhia's service to return to Europe. Lakhwā ordered his deputy Nānā Rao who was posted at Karnāl, to collect revenue from the Cis-Satlaj country. Fighting immediately broke out; the Patiālā queen and Bhangā Singh of Thāneshwar defeated Nānā Rao and drove him back to Delhi (October 1795). Immediately after this Marātha reverse, a body of five thousand Sikhs burst into the Upper Doāb. "The local militia made no stand against them. The Marātha garrisons in Sāharanpur were scattered like chaff before the wind." The garrison of the town of Sāharanpur retreated precipitately and took shelter in the fort of Jalālābād. But George Thomas, detached by Āpā Khāndé Rao, appeared with a portion of his Mewāt force and the Sikhs fled away at his approach. Lakhwā Dādā then (November 1795) appointed Thomas as Warden of the Marches to guard the Jamunā frontier of the Upper Doāb, with a contingent of 2,000 infantry, 200 horse and sixteen pieces of artillery; he was assigned the parganas of Pānipat, Sonpat, and Karnāl for their pay.

Thomas found his task no easy one. Throughout the winter of 1796-97, Bāpu Malhār, the governor of Sāharanpur, exerted himself to restore some appearance of order, but the Sikh sardārs associated with him as allies, were found

to be intriguing with their brethren in the Panjab and stirring up rebellion against the Maratha Government.* The Sikh commandant of the flourishing market-town of Shamli though a servant of Gurdat Singh of Ladwā (a vassal of Sindhiā), was detected in this treasonable correspondence. His fort was attacked by Thomas, and the entire garrison including the commandant and his family were put to the sword (c. Dec. 1796). Immediately after this victory, Thomas proceeded northwards to Lakhnauti and helped Bāpu Malhar in subduing Bahramand Ali Khan the rebel Turkoman jagirdar of that place. He then recrossed the Jamuna and defeated the Sikh confederates in four successive actions near Karnal (c. March 1797.)

§ 8. *George Thomas, his early history.*

Of all the European military adventurers in India George Thomas lived a life of the most romantic interest, marked by the brilliancy and briefness of a meteor.†

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* One large body of Sikh raiders, 11,000 strong, under Sahib Singh of Patiala, reached Hardwar, where on 10th April 1796, the last day of the great Kumbh fair, they suddenly looted and massacred the pilgrims. Some five hundred Hindu monks and merchants were put to the sword, many others were drowned in their attempt to escape across that swift current. A battalion of Oudh sepoys under an English captain named Murray, who happened to be present there arrested the advance of the Sikh horse, who retired next day, plundering all that they found on the way. Gupta, ii. 262-268.

† It is now possible to reconstruct the story of George Thomas's life in Northern India with accuracy of details and dates, and to correct the narratives of W. Francklin and Louis Ferdinand Smith, who depended on the faded memory of an unlettered soldier and, may we add, his Irish brogue, or the romance woven a generation after his death by the Eurasian family of Skinner. L. F. Smith, though a contemporary and a practised writer, belonged to his enemy's camp and knew only the events of the last years of Thomas. A correspondent's letters from Lucknow, published in the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1802, (Characters, pp. 55-57) probably written by L. F. Smith, are useful on a few points. But we now possess contemporary evidence of unimpeachable authenticity, namely, (i) the despatches of the Maratha Resident at Delhi, (ii) the news-letters written to the British Resident with Sindhia by his agents in the camps of Thomas and his opponents and incorporated in the Resident's letters to the Governor General, and (iii) weekly (sometimes daily) reports of occurrences in the Delhi Emperor's Court and the news from various places that came to that capital. These last are found in Persian manuscripts called *ākhbārāt*. It is therefore necessary to make heavy corrections in Francklin and

Born of very poor Irish parents in Tipperary about 1756, he received no education and enlisted as a common sailor. On his ship touching at Madras about 1782 he deserted it and took to the roving life of a soldier of fortune under the wild jungle chiefs of the south known as poligars. He next served as a gunner in the Nizam's army, but tiring of this work in six months, he made his way on foot to Delhi (c 1787), and was there taken into the European corps of Begam Samru

His tall manly form, wild courage, inborn power of command, and Irish humour and generosity, soon won the Begam's confidence and, it is said, her love also After testing his capacity in the Emperor's campaign against Najaf Quli Khan (Ch 36 § 7) and in many an encounter with the rebel peasantry, she made him collector of the sub-division of Tappal (32 miles n w of Aligarh) in her *jāgir,* which had a revenue of Rs 70,000, and even married him to one of her adopted daughters,—evidently the child of some European officer in her corps As a district magistrate, Thomas strongly suppressed law-breakers, scared away Sikh raiders, and nearly doubled the revenue collection of Tappal Then came his dismissal

According to the story told by him, he had advised his mistress to economise by dismissing some of the useless French adventurers in her service This set the French party at Sardhānā against him, and their leader Le Vasseau with whom the Begam was over head and ears in love convinced her that Thomas's real aim was to deprive her of her true friends and then carve an independent principality for himself out of her estate The Marātha Resident at Delhi, however, reported that the Begam had dismissed Thomas for wenching (*baté-bāzi*) The Irish youth must have wearied of the faded charms of the old hag and consoled himself among the younger beauties of her large

Smith and their modern derivatives, such as Atkinson's *N W P Gazetteer,* volumes ii & iii, Herbert Compton's *Particular Account,* and Keene's *Hindustan under the Free-lances*

mestizo household. So, she dismissed him. But he refused to yield Tappal and was attacked there, taken, and confined. (c. Sep. 1793.) Released at the intercession of Shah Nizāmuddin (Mahadji's agent at the imperial court) Thomas made his way to Anupshahar, the northernmost British cantonment, and set up as a private captain of mercenaries on a small scale.

§ 9. *George Thomas under Apā Khāndé Rao.*

But such a good fighter could not long remain unnoticed. Apā Khāndé Rao, the Marātha governor of the country west of Delhi (Mewāt) engaged him (c. Oct. 1793) and placed a battalion of sepoys under him. He worked for this master for four years.

Early in the year 1794 we find Thomas raising fresh troops, collecting revenue by force from the ever refractory peasantry of Mewat, and (in April) supporting his unpaid soldiers by looting Gurgāon and two other villages in Begam Samru's *jagir* of Pādishāhpur *taluq*. As Āpā Khāndé Rāo enlarged the contingent of Thomas he assigned to him Tijārā, Tapukrā and Firuzpur as fiefs for the maintenance of his troops, and he had to fight repeatedly before he could impose his authority on the wild unruly peasantry.* (March-July 1794). Tijarā was occupied only after a fight, Bahādurgarh was looted by him, and Jhajhar captured. Soon afterwards Jhajhar, Pataudi and the neighbouring villages were added to his *jāgir*, raising his income (on paper) to 1½ lakhs of Rupees a year.

In November 1795, Thomas was sent by Apā Khāndé Rāo to the Sāharanpur district to drive away a horde of 5,000 Sikh raiders who were investing the fort of Jalālābād. Lakhwā Dādā then appointed Thomas as warden of the marches to guard the Jamunā frontier of the Upper Doāb, and raised his contingent to 2,000 infantry, 200 cavalry and

* Thomas defeats Bakhtī, the rebel zamindār of Rewāri (*DY.* ii. 120), makes raids near Delhi (Sep. 1794. *DY.* ii. 128-129), forces the nephew of Ganesh Vishnu Āhir, rebel, to surrender his fort of Belji (Oct. *DY.* ii. 136.)

16 pieces of artillery, and for their maintenance assigned to him the parganas of Pānipat, Sonpat and Karnāl. In July 1796, Thomas took a noble revenge. Begam Samru had been imprisoned by her troops and her step-son Zafaryāb Khan placed in power nine months before, (Oct. 1795). But on 9th July 1796, Thomas moved by her appeal, marched with his sepoys very secretly to Sardhānā, where he was joined by some troops in the Begam's interest, with whom he had already concerted her restoration. The Maratha sardārs in Delhi were privy to the plot, and encouraged it. She was restored to the lordship of Sardhānā and sent her worthless step-son into confinement. (*P.R.C.* viii. 206.)

Throughout 1796, Thomas had to fight the Sikhs on both banks of the Jamunā and was always successful (§ 7 *ante*). But in 1797 his fortune took a turn for the worse. He had so long managed somehow or other to get on with Āpa Khānde Rāo, inspite of Āpā's jealousy, failure to keep his promises, and even treacherous plots against his life. Āpā died on 25th June 1797, and his nephew Vāman Rāo succeeded to his governorship and continued to keep Thomas in his service for some time.

But the Maratha administration fast deteriorated. Thomas could not get the promised pay from his employer, and found the income of his sandy *jāgir* unequal to meet the expenses of his troops. So, he was driven to support his contingent by the plunder he got during the state of continual warfare in which he was engaged. In 1797 he made a raid from his base at Jhajhar upon the Jaipur town of Urkā (35 m. n. e. of Jhunjhunu) and took a ransom of Rs. 52,000 from it, but the town was destroyed by an accidental fire.

§ 10. *Battle of Fathpur, February 1798*

At the beginning of the next year (1798), Lakhwā Dādā ordered Vāman Rao to invade the Jaipur kingdom for collecting the tribute due. Thomas was offered a subsidy of

half a lakh of rupees a month, and joined Vaman Rao with three battalions of infantry (each [illegible] strong), [illegible] Rohela musketeers, 200 peasant militia of Hariāna, [illegible] horsemen and fourteen pieces of artillery. The confederates set out from Karnāl and entered the Shekhāwati district on the north side of the Kachhwa kingdom, levying contributions from the villages on the way. Bāgh Singh of Khandela and other disloyal barons of that district welcomed and subsidised the invaders out of spite for their liege lord the Rajah of Jaipur.

Thomas after severe fighting took possession of the fortified city of Fathpur, 30 miles north of Sikar, and made it his base. A large Jaipur army under Rodoji Khawās arrived, encamped eight miles from Fathpur, and on 8th February advanced to attack Thomas's position. But Rajput incapacity to co-ordinate movements and the personal cowardice of their supreme commander (who had followed the tailor's profession before his Rajah's favour made him prime minister) enabled Thomas and his highly capable lieutenant Morris to handle their very much smaller but highly disciplined corps so skilfully that the isolated attacks of the two wings of the Jaipur army were beaten back as they came up one after another. Then Rodoji ordered a general charge by his centre, consisting of 6,000 picked royal troops. But "this main body had by this time become a confused mass, without order, regularity or method. Mr. Thomas perceiving them at a stand, commenced a heavy fire of grape-shot, when after sustaining much loss, the enemy retreated."

A last desperate charge followed the retreat. It brought no change in the issue of the day, but redeemed the honour of the Rajputs. A dense body of Jaipur cavalry headed by Ranjit Singh, the chieftain of Chomu, advanced sword in hand to recover a pair of 24 pounder guns which their comrades had abandoned in the earlier retreat. The Marātha cavalry supporting Thomas fled away before the onset, and the Rajput horsemen breaking into Thomas's left wing pellmell with these fugitives, began to cut down

a great number of his sepoys. "The moment was critical ... Mr. Thomas, with the only gun that remained, which he loaded up to the muzzle, and about 150 of his followers, waited the event with fortitude. After permitting the enemy to approach within forty yards, he gave them three discharges of his gun accompanied by three volleys of musketry." The rout of the enemy was complete. The brave baron of Chomu was severely wounded, Bahādur Singh and Pāhār Singh (of the Khangārot branch) fell, but the two guns were recovered. On that long and bloody day, the Rajput casualties exceeded 2,000, while Thomas lost 300 men. But peace was soon made by Vāman Rao under orders of Daulat Rao Sindhiā.

Disgusted with his Marātha employers, George Thomas now decided to set up an independent State of his own.

§ 11. *George Thomas creates an independent principality in Hariānā.*

Up to the end of 1797, George Thomas had been a regular servant of some lawful authority or other. But when Āpā Khāndé Rāo's successor terminated his services, Thomas became a private robber-captain for his living. As H. Compton writes, "Thrown solely on his own resources, Thomas became a free-booter pure and simple. He began to support himself by filibustering raids on the towns and villages of his neighbours, without any regard whatever for the elementary laws of property." In the intervals of his personal raids, he and his band of ruffians hired themselves out to any party that would pay them.

As the base for such a rover's life, he chose the Noman's Land west of the Rewāri—Delhi—Karnāl districts and south of Patiālā, which bore the name of Hariānā, with the city and fort of Hānsi for his capital. Here he established what his biographers have called by the hyperbolical name of a kingdom, though it had only half the revenue of an average *faujdāri* or district in a province of the Mughal empire.

The tract of land under the rule of George Thomas was oval in shape, with ill-defined and ever-shifting frontiers. It extended 32 to 48 miles in different directions. On the north lay the Ghaghar river which separated it from the lands under Sikh occupation; on the west the country of the predatory Bhatti tribe, beyond which lay the deserts of Bikaner. The south was bounded by the Rewari district. In most parts of this tract, water is scarce. Hence the inhabitants have constructed wells often 120 to 150 or even 200 feet deep. In the Hissar district there are 300 such wells.

The northern part of Hariana owes its life to the Ghaghar river, which remains lost in sand during nine months of the year, but overflows during the rainy season and spreads over the soil a rich fertilizing loam washed down from the Himalayan foot-hills, which yields an abundant crop of the finest wheat. The south and west parts are dry and the water has to be drawn up from very deep wells, because the rainfall is scanty and drought is frequent. Here in good seasons, they grow millets, pulses, barley and rice. But "the pasturage is uncommonly luxuriant. . . . The grass of Hariana is of a superior quality, both as to wholesomeness and nourishment. Hence the cattle excel those of other parts." Even today the Hissar breed of bulls and cows is famous throughout India.

After the autumn harvest has been gathered in, for seven months of the year the country presents an arid brown sandy surface to the eye, unrelieved by a single bush or tree. But as soon as the first showers of the monsoon begin to fall, within four days a magical transformation takes place; one morning the face of the country is suddenly seen to be covered with a soft green carpet stretching up to the horizon, from the sprouting plants. Hence it has been called *Hariana*, or the Green country.

This tract has been the battle ground of successive hordes of invaders for ten centuries or more, and as the tide of conquest has rolled away eastwards to Delhi or southwards

to Rajasthan, Hariānā itself has been left uncared for and undefended as a very poor possession This history has moulded the character of the people "The natives of Hariānā, for a succession of ages having been in a constant state of warfare, possess great personal bravery they are expert in the use of arms, but though brave they are in disposition cruel, treacherous and vindictive"

The inhabitants of the town of Kānhori, where the "best and bravest men of Hariānā" lived, were "notorious for their thievish depredations" Men of this stamp were exactly suited to act as the retainers and plundering assistants of a bandit-army like that of George Thomas, just as the Pindhari looters followed the regular Marātha armies without pay but on condition of being allowed to live by plundering the enemy So, he attached a band 200 of them to his brigade, to keep them out of mischief Like master, like man [Francklin, 122-133 *Hissar Dist. Gaz*]

Early in 1798, Thomas occupied Hānsi, and after a short sharp attack on Kānhori, gained possession of the whole southern portion of Hariānā, gradually extending his rule northwards to the Ghaghar river and northwestwards to the Bhāti frontier At its best his new principality contained 14 parganas consisting of 253 villages, with a nominal rent roll of Rs 2,86,000 In addition, he held from the Marāthas on service-tenure five parganas consisting of 151 villages and a nominal revenue of Rs 1,41,000, these were Jhajhar, Bari, Mandauti, Pataudi and Badli

§ 12 *George Thomas lives by plunder*

Returning from the Jaipur expedition in April 1798, George Thomas established himself in the ancient and dilapidated town of Hānsi in the centre of Hariānā, remodelling and strengthening its ruined fort and repairing the defensive wall of the city that lay at its foot (May) His gentle and just rule over his subjects and his manifest power to protect them from outside spoliators, soon repeopled that

deserted town, and its population rose to 6,000 souls under his care. Here he established a mint and coined his own rupees (*sikka-i-sāhib*, anno hijeri 1214). "I cast my own artillery, commenced making muskets, matchlocks and powder," as he wrote.

In September he made a predatory incursion into Bikaner territory, stormed the fortified city of Jaipur and plundered the places on the way. The Raja Surat Singh bought him off by paying one lakh. With these resources he trebled his original force of two battalions of infantry and 1000 horse, and added more pieces of cannon. His power was feared and his aid courted by the great potentates in the neighbourhood. George Thomas's greatest asset was his character as a bold determined fighter and a born leader of men. But he lived solely by plunder and his resources in men and money were too poor for any substantial or enduring conquest. In fact, his power and achievement have been greatly exaggerated by his European biographers. Even against the Sikhs, he was invincible only when opposed by their small disunited bands, because they had nothing to oppose to his artillery. But when a national danger drew most of the Sikh sardārs together, Thomas found himself speedily enveloped by their hordes and was starved into a hurried retreat. Against a disciplined opponent he could make no stand. But in one respect George Thomas stands conspicuously apart from the other European military adventurers in India. In the independent career of his last four years, he cut himself off from every civilized base such as the English and French condottieri captains had in India. He worked in isolation with only one other Euro

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* In De Boigne's corps a single infantry battalion (the rank and file) cost Rs. 40,800 a year in salary only, excluding the pay of the two European commanders and the cost of the men [illegible] artillery attached to each battalion. Add to the amount the pay and allowances of an Indian commandant, and a battalion could not have cost G. Thomas less than Rs. 43,200 a year. Thus, three battalions and [illegible] artillery would have swallowed up two lakhs of Rupees, which was probably the utmost he ever actually realised from his Hariana [illegible], with a rent roll of Rs. 2,86,000 on paper but never collected in full.

pean (Morris)* in his corps Hence, the whole fabric of his army and "kingdom" rested solely on his personality We must admit, though, that that personality was worthy of the age of the Spanish Conquistadores of the New World

§ 13 *George Thomas as "the Irish Rajah" fights Sikhs and Bhatis*

We shall now briefly trace the history of Thomas as "the Irish Rajah" On returning from Bikāner, he laid siege to Gokulgarh, a fort two miles from Rewāri and belonging to Sindhiā's local governor (late in September 1798) It proved too strong a place for him Early in November he was out on foray again Leaving his camp at Bahādurgarh, he attacked Bhāg Singh, the Rajah of Jind, on being bribed by a dispossessed jāgirdār whose fief had been transferred to another man His impetuous assault on Jind was repulsed with loss, and many other Sikh sardars having now arrived to aid the Jind Raja, Thomas was forced into the defensive The siege lasted for three months, but at last at the end of February 1799, he had to abandon the attempt and return to Hānsi, harassed by the Sikhs and the peasantry on the way A peace was patched up, each side recognising the *status quo* (March)

Meantime Lakhwā Dādā, as the champion of Mahādji Sindhiā's widows, had risen against Daulat Rao's authority But the loyal general Ambāji Inglé hired Thomas's force for half a lakh of Rupees a month, and the two together marched out of Kanud (c 15 April 1799) to fight Lakhwā in Ajmir and Mewār This campaign has been described in the history of Lakhwā Dādā (Ch 13 § 6) On 2nd November, Ambāji terminated the service of Thomas, who returned to Hānsi

In the middle of January 1800, Thomas invaded Patiālā at the call of princess Sāhib Kaur, who had been

* In the last year of his career, 1801, he was joined by two other European captains, Birch and Hopkins, and the young Eurasian Hyder Jang Hearsey, who had left Perron's brigades Two European sergeants are also mentioned as under him

thrown into prison by her worthless brother, the Rajah of that State Thomas took much plunder there and promptly returned to besiege Sirsa,* a fort belonging to the Muslim Bhāti tribe and to plunder the landholders In July we find his contingent raised to "seven battalions of infantry, 500 cavalry, 20 field pieces of artillery and four howitzers, the whole well-equipped, regularly paid, and in strict subordination" (*PRC* ix. 2, 3, 19) His seven months campaign in the Bhāti country and capture of Bhātner brought him much wealth

Next year, the princess Sahib Kaur renewed hostilities against her brother, and Thomas again invaded Patialā to support her, (beginning to January 1801) This expedition has been magnified by himself and his biographers into a grand attempt for "the conquest of the Punjab and planting the British standard on the banks of the Attock" (*i e*, the Indus) At first his progress could not be checked, as the Sikh sardārs were disunited and torn by mutual jealousy But in time the whole Khālsa force of that region came together, enveloped the invader, and cut him off from his base (end of March 1801) Thomas with great dexterity, took advantage of the internal dissensions of the Sikh forces and beat a hurried retreat to his dominions in safety. (April) †

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* *Sirsā*, in the Hisār district, but its territory has now been divided between the Hisar and Ferozpur districts of the Panjab Sirsa fort is 50 m n w of Hisar town

† The above account, based on Francklin, has been corrected by the Patiala historian, Prof S N Banerji, after work on the records of that State and the Government of India His [illegible]

Thomas's first raid led to prolonged desultory fighting, from Nov 1799 to May 1800 The second raid began about January 1801 and ended with his retreat in March or April The third [illegible] only the fringe of Patiala territory on the side of the Ghaggar river, and ended in June 1801, it was not actuated by any chivalrous desire to rescue the Princess

H Compton's date for the death of Sāhib Kaur (15 Sep 1801) has been accepted by both of us, as the alternative (year 1799) given by Lepel Griffin is not supported by any contemporary record, and is merely entered in a modern official note in the Patiala record office, which may have been taken from Griffin without verification [*PRC* ix 241, 248-249.]

§ 14. *George Thomas attacked by Perron, his defeat and death*

Next month he was out again, levying contribution on Jind, and in early June made his way to the Ghaghar in order to raid Patiālā territory beyond that river But now a mightier opponent appeared on the scene General Perron, whom Daulat Rao Sindhiā had made his supreme commander in North India, was now eager to consolidate his power by crushing out all his rivals, of whom Thomas was the last. Bhāg Singh of Jind bought the support of Perron (June) and that French General promised subsidies to other Sikh sardars for a coalition against their common enemy George Thomas Thus the Irish adventurer had to abandon his vaunted plan for annexing the Panjab, leave Kāithal, and return to Hānsi (early in July 1801) A compromise between Perron and Thomas was attempted by mutual friends, and the two met together at Bahādurgarh on 19th August, but the attempt failed, as Perron was obdurate in his Anglo-phobia and the Irish adventurer was equally bitter towards all Frenchmen

Perron was now concentrating overwhelming force for crushing George Thomas and also succeeded in seducing most of his unpaid troops Thomas was hopelessly outmatched and his fall was as meteoric as his rise Early in September 1801, Perron sent Major Louis Bourquien, with ten battalions of sepoys, 3,000 cavalry, and 500 Ruhelā Ali Ghol to attack Thomas, who was then out plundering Jind The Irishman retreated, avoiding an engagement A detachment of Perron's army under L F. Smith and F. Felix Smith, laid siege to Georgegarh, a fort built by G Thomas eight miles west of Jhajhar and named after himself Thomas advanced from Hānsi to the relief of the fort, and after a forced march surprised, defeated and dispersed the weaker force of the besiegers (on 29th Sept.) The two Smiths escaped and joined Bourquien who was coming up to their support Thomas started for return to Hānsi, but was interrupted by Major Bourquien, on the

1st of October, when a severe but indecisive action was fought with about 600 casualties on each side.

There are great discrepancies in the details and dates of this campaign between the statements of Resident Collins's news-agents in Delhi which he reported *immediately* to the Governor-General and the story told by Thomas himself (or written down by his Persian clerks) for Francklin in Benares about July 1802. George Thomas was illiterate; he kept no diary or other *contemporary* record of his campaigns, and his Persian *munshis* might be set against the same class of reporters in the service of Collins. But about the dates I have followed Thomas, (e.g., Collins puts the second battle in the *afternoon of the same day, viz.*, 29th September, and Francklin in the afternoon of 1st October.) The details of movements and casualties also differ widely, but in the case of the last I believe in Collins.

But the swarms of Sikh horsemen who flocked to Bourquien's side, surrounded the camp of Thomas, two miles south of Jhajhar, so that his provisions ran short and "flour began to sell at eight seers for a rupee." George held out manfully against growing difficulties and desertions, but at last finding his post untenable he fled away from the camp in the night of 10th November with his cavalry only. But the whole of his artillery and baggage was captured and his abandoned sepoy battalions were stripped of their arms and property by the victor, who secured Georgegarh.

Bourquien pursued Thomas to Hānsi and invested the place. The Irish chief was now without money, men, or faithful followers (except a handful of Rajputs), with daily mutiny among his famished troops; at last he surrendered himself to Bourquien on 23rd December 1801, and his capital opened its gates* to Perron's men. He was allowed

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* Bourquien secured the persons of Thomas and his European officers on 23rd Dec. and the *city* of Hānsi at the same time. The *fort* of Hānsi held out till the 29th of that month. Collins to Governor-General, 28 Dec. 1801 and 8 Jan. 1802. Francklin, Chap. XIV.

to depart for British India, and reached Anupshahar early in January 1802. Setting out on return home in the next rainy season, he had reached Berhampur in Bengal, when death put an end to his ambitions and sorrows on 22nd August, 1802.

CHAPTER XLVII

GENERAL PERRON'S INDIAN CAREER

§ 1 *His early history*

Pierre-François Cuillier (who in India changed his name to Cuillier Perron, by which he is known) was born in Southern France and baptised on 6th August, 1755 Driven by poverty he enlisted in the French Royal service, first as a soldier, and later as a sailor in the East Indies After running away from his ship when it touched at Pondicherry, he travelled to North India in search of fortune, and at first (in 1781) entered the corps which René Madec had raised and sold to the Rānā of Gohad Its commandant at that time was a Scotsman named Sangster, a good mechanic Perron had learnt the technique of casting guns, when a youth in France, and his first office was that of an artilleryman or at best an overseer in Sangster's cannon foundry * When the Rānā of Gohad was crushed by Mahadji Sindhia (in 1783), this corps was broken up, and Perron found employment in Lesteneau's battalion in the Bharatpur Raja's service, as a quarter-master sergeant on Rs 60 a month (1784) When in January 1789 Lesteneau fled away with Ghulām Qādir's saddle-bags crammed with jewels looted from the Delhi palace, his sepoys mutinied for their

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* On 16 Dec 1782 Perron married at Agra, Madeleine (aged 14) the daughter of the late Louis Dérідan, a French Eurasian of Pondicherry (*Elle tenait de ses parents plus de sang indien que de sang français*, Martineau, 97, 211-213) Another daughter of Déridan, named Anne, was married to the Dutch colonel John W Hessing (d at Agra, 21 July 1803), whose son was George Hessing The brother of these ladies, also named Louis Déridan, gave his daughter in marriage to Sutherland, a Scotsman Another Miss Déridan, was married to the Eurasian J B Filose We know of two Armenians in Sindhia's army, —Jacob (whom Perron could not create a Captain in 1795, because his European officers refused to admit an Asiatic to their mess, and who then came away from Puna to Agra, where Hessing gave him a Captaincy), and Aratoon We find both of them in Sindhia's service in 1813 (St Genis, 367 *PRC* xv)

arrears of pay, and the corps was broken up But Perron found a new patron in De Boigne, whom Mahādji Sindhia had authorised (in August 1789) to raise a brigade of infantry, and who had formed a favourable opinion of him. So, Perron was appointed commandant (styled captain-lieutenant in those days) in one of the new battalions "Perron soon ingratiated himself with his chief by his courage, activity and great punctuality in his duties He was a subordinate after De Boigne's heart, being diligent, energetic and indefatigable, taking a pride in bringing his battalion to the highest pitch of efficiency and discipline." (II Compton) His administrative capacity, industry, and cool calculating habits made him stand apart from the common run of European military adventurers in India, whose boisterous life of vice made them "a disgrace to any service"

In April 1792, while Sindhia's troops were besieging Kanud, Perron acted as De Boigne's deputy in receiving the surrender of Mirzā Ismail Beg (Ch 39 § 2) Thus, when a second brigade was raised for Mahādji Sindhia by De Boigne (in 1793), Perron was appointed its brigadier (called major in those days) Col Frémont, an ex-officer of the French Royal service, who commanded Sindhia's first brigade, was the senior officer under De Boigne, but he died on 8th July 1794, and the way was cleared for Perron's rise to the top

Towards the end of the year 1794, when a trial of arms with the Nizām was decided upon by the Peshwā, Daulat Rao Sindhiā called up Perron with his brigade to Punā, and this French general took the decisive part in the defeat of the Nizām at Khardā (11th March 1795.) So, it was only natural that when De Boigne resigned at the end of that year, Sindhiā gave Perron the independent command of the First Brigade, while the Second Brigade, (so long under Perron), was placed under Sutherland, but at first no commander-in-chief of the two Brigades was appointed to take De Boigne's place. (*PRC* viii. No. 27, vi 20)

Perron was created Colonel in 1796, and stayed with Daulat Rao Sindhiā at Puna till 22nd August 1797 when he was sent off to Northern India to take charge of the military *jāgīrs* which Mahādji had assigned for De Boigne's corps. As yet he was not viceroy of Sindhiā's Hindustan dominions, the Agra—Delhi—Doab country, for that post was held by Lakhwā Dādā, whom Perron had to obey. We have seen in Chapter 13 the part played by Perron in the Widows' War against Daulat Rao. After the first dismissal of Lakhwā Dādā, Sindhiā rewarded Perron's loyalty by authorising him to wrest the fort of Delhi (and with it the custody of the Emperor) from Lakhwā's agent Bhau Bhāskar Lātya, which Perron effected through his lieutenant Pedron, in October 1798. [*PRC* viii p. xv. Nos. 74-78. Martineau 61.]

In October 1798, Daulat Rao Sindhiā nominated Ambāji Inglé as his viceroy of Hindustan in the place of the rebel Lakhwā Dādā, and Perron acted in loyal co-operation with Ambāji. His reward was that Daulat Rao raised him to the same status that De Boigne had enjoyed with the title of General. At the same time Sindhiā influenced the puppet Shah Alam II to confer on Perron (on 12th February 1799) the rank of a commander of 7,000 (*haft-hazāri* mansabdār) with the hyperbolical oriental titles, of Nāsir-ul-mulk, Intizām-ud-daulah, Bahādur, Muzaffar Jang. His military fiefs at this time, had an annual income of 27 lakhs of rupees. (Martineau, 65-66. *PRC* viii No. 123.)

General Perron's first task was to gain possession of the Sindhian forts in the North still held by Lakhwā Dādā's partisans. Thus, on 16th April 1799, he succeeded in taking delivery of Agra fort from Vishrām Bhāu by paying the dues of the garrison, and of Aligarh fort on the 27th of the same month.* Perron now made Aligarh his head quarters.

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* Agra, *PRC* viii 131-135. Aligarh, *Ibid* 136-137. Khurjā, the last fort held by the Widows' party, submitted to Ambāji Inglé on 1st May. *Ibid* 142. Perron's Doab campaign, *Ibid* 141-153.

Leaving Aligarh on 2nd May, Perron joined Ambāji Inglé near Siyānā on the 8th, and the two marched together subduing the refractory zamindārs of the middle Doab—Siyānā, Parichitgarh, Sāharanpur, &c, and even trying to force Begam Samru to acknowledge herself as his vassel But this last attempt was given up, on the strong objection of the Emperor and Sindhiā. So they retired to their bases at the end of June

But Lakhwā Dādā returned to Sindhiā's favour and was restored to his office of viceroy of Hindustan, on 15th September Perron was now called upon by Daulat Rao to co operate with him in the projected campaign for exacting tribute from Rajputana

Near the end of September Perron followed by Ambāji arrived at Delhi and had his audience with Shah Alam II Early next month the two marched from Delhi, first to settle the Rewāri-Narnaul district belonging to the military fief of Filose, and then to advance to Jaipur and meet Lakhwā Dādā for concerting the means of collecting its Raja's tribute long overdue to Sindhiā. Perron offered to effect a reconciliation between Lakhwā Dādā and Ambāji, his displaced predecessor in the viceroyalty of Hindustan On 27th October, the three chiefs met together at Muazzamābād, and their quarrel was settled on terms which have been described in chapter 43, § 6 Thus Perron was allowed to keep the forts of Delhi, Agra and Aligarh, until Daulat Rao's final decision should be known

Perron next made a journey to Jaipur (c 10 Nov), visited the Raja and held a parley about the tributes due to his master, receiving paper orders for their payment. Leaving Jaipur on the 22nd of that month, he returned to his head quarters at Aligarh *

In December 1799, Perron had to detach a force which defeated and expelled the Ruhelā raiders from the Sāharanpur district in his *jāgir* A large detachment from his army,

* Perron at Rewāri (11 Oct 1799), Mālpura (21 Oct), Muazzamābād (27 Oct), Jaipur (10-22 Nov) *PRC* viii 171-188

under Pohlmann supported Lakhwā Dādā in defeating the Jaipur Raja in the battle of Malpura on 15th April 1800 (Ch 43 § 8)

Less than a month after this victory, Lakhwā Dādā fell out of Sindhiā's favour and went into rebellion. The final eclipse of such an able and patriotic chief had the effect of leaving Perron without a rival as the most powerful servant of Daulat Rao in North India, though he was not yet invested with the office of Viceroy. On 15th April 1800, Perron left Aligarh on a tribute-collecting expedition to Rajputana and gathered the fruits of Lakhwā's victory at Malpurā.

Next year (1801) Perron personally marched south of the Chambal and crushed Lakhwā Dādā in the battle of Seondha, on 3rd May (Ch 44 § 5). Soon afterwards he gained the fort of Ajmer from Lakhwā's partisan, through his lieutenant, Louis Bourquien (8th May). The result was that this French adventurer now held the seven most important forts in Sindhiā's northern territories,—Agra, Ajmer, Delhi, Aligarh, Khurjā, Sāharanpur and Firuzābād. Added to this, in July he was appointed subahdār of the Delhi province, an office which he exercised through his deputy Drugeon. The last three months of this year saw Perron's hard-won triumph over George Thomas, and the extinction of that Irish adventurer's dream of planting the British flag on the bank of the Satlaj (Ch 46 § 14)

§ 2 *Perron becomes supreme commander*

Early next year (1802) Perron was summoned by his master to his court at Ujjain. He had his first audience of Daulat Rao Sindhia in that city on 29th March.* He was hailed by Sindhia almost as a deliverer, because there was

* A full account of this interview and others that followed it was given by James Skinner, some 35 years later, to his biographer Fraser (i 241-246). An absolutely contemporary and far more reliable account is found in the despatches of Resident Collins (present at Ujjain at the time), as printed in *PRC* vol ix, Nos 47-51. H Compton expresses his disbelief in Skinner's narrative, p 273. Grant Duff is silent. Perron left Ujjain on his return journey on 23rd April, and reached Aligarh at the beginning of May.

all but civil war between Daulat Rao's prime minister Jādav Rao Bhāskar and his father-in-law Sharzā Rao Ghatgé, each of them guarding his own house with many hundreds of armed followers Sutherland was accused of collusion with Ghātgé in a plot for "cutting off Jādav Rao and several other sardārs of rank" and Brownrigg of "having been a party in the intrigues of Sutherland" But Perron sternly reasserted his authority over his army by arresting Brownrigg and threatening to court-martial Sutherland whose brigade was changed and he sent off from Sindhia's side to Agra Above all, Perron secured from his master a confirmation of his power, emoluments, and jāgirs and the custody of the seven most important forts in Hindustan by presenting 15 lakhs of Rupees to the insolvent Sindhia at his audience of leave-taking at Ujjain

This conference with his employer at Ujjain, marks a turning point in Perron's life Returning to his head-quarters at Aligarh, he set himself solely to the task of ensuring his own retreat to France with all his hoarded millions Perron was remarkable for his cool calculating nature and a business capacity more worthy of a tradesman than of a fighting general He was very early convinced of the precarious nature of Sindhia's Government and his own status as the head of Daulat Rao's Europeanised army He knew that in a conflict with the English, the bloated military power of Sindhia would burst like a bubble in a few weeks Therefore during the sixteen months (from May 1802 to September 1803) that he continued in Sindhia's service, his policy was secretly to complete his money-collection in Rajputana and Eastern Panjab, transfer his hoarded wealth to British banks, and negotiate with the English for his safe return to Europe At the same time he continued publicly to give his master anti-British counsels, and to order his subordinates to fight the English to the last

For, even at the height of his power, Perron could not forget for a moment that his power had no real basis, and that every Maratha *sardār* was his natural enemy, and would

seize every opportunity to poison their master's ears against him and hurl this overgrown foreign instrument down. While the Durrānī menace lasted, they had per force to humour the master of the campoo, but that menace ended with the year 1798, and just after this Perron's power and resources began to increase rapidly as he was the one loyal and thoroughly dependable servant of Daulat Rao* during the civil war in the Sindhia family.

§ 3. *Perron secretly turns against Sindhia*

When Perron returned from Ujjain to Aligarh in May 1802, he was seemingly at the height of his power. But he had already received at Sindhia's capital clear proof that he could expect neither consistency nor gratitude from such a master, and that every Maratha minister and noble was his jealous enemy. Within a month of his return he received from Daulat Rao Sindhia peremptory orders to give up all the *mahals* in his possession not appertaining to his *jāidād*. Such an order highly displeased the General and he immediately sent in his resignation to Sindhia (early in June), saying, "If Daulat Rao so wished he might reduce the military establishment of his 41 battalions, which cost 50 lakhs annually, and likewise assign a *jāidād* for the payment of the same to some other officer who might be deemed competent to the command." But Daulat Rao was in no position to part with such an army chief at a time when he was sinking deeper and deeper into the quicksand of his war with Jaswant Rao Holkar. [*PRC.* ix. 64, 65.]

So, Perron continued to govern Sindhia's northern dominions, and utilised the respite to pile up the fortune to be carried home. In May next year, when Daulat Rao had marched to Burhanpur and his war with the English loomed close ahead, Perron sent him a formal letter seeking

* "Sindhia's repeated acts of treachery towards his sardārs have so completely disgusted and alarmed the old adherents of his family that, were it not for the support of the brigades commanded by the European officers, his power would be soon annihilated." Res. Collins to G G, 9 June 1800. *PRC.* ix. 15.

permission to resign his office and return to France At the same time he obtained the British commander-in-chief's permission to proceed to Lucknow. In British official circles it was well-known in July that Perron "anxiously desired to retire to Europe with his wealth and to dispose of his actual command and of his territorial possessions to some person" [*As An Reg.* for 1804, Country News, p 7, *PRC* ix 119 and 221]

§ 4 *Perron was no agent of the French Government*

Marquess Wellesley and his British admirers were not tired of saying that Perron was building up "a French State in the heart of India" with the aim of "extending it to the Satlaj and beyond" * Such a theory ignores the practical, mercenary character of Perron and the basic facts of Indian geography With all the Indian sea-ports under British control and the British navy dominating the Indian Ocean, Perron's army isolated in the heart of North India, however initially supplied with European officers and military engines, would have had to live "in the air" and ultimately die of inanition.

Napoleon and the Chauvinistic school of French writers have denounced Perron as a traitor to his native land He was nothing of the kind He had never written to the Government in France or to its representatives in India, offering himself as an instrument of French imperialist ambitions on the Indian soil, as René Madec had done repeatedly 25 years earlier No official letter of the French ministers, no emissary of the Government of

* Perron's alliance with the Cis-Satlaj Sikh chieftains who hired his armed aid against George Thomas and their domestic enemies, was a purely mercenary contract The idea that he was planning to found a French dominion in the Panjab beyond his Agra-Delhi charge is chimerical After the fall of George Thomas (end of the year 1801), "Bourquien's brigade overawed the Sikh country, and that bold brigadier was engaged in levying tribute from his recent allies [Sikhs], under the guise of collecting a contribution towards the expenses of the [late] war, so that the cost of expelling Thomas was defrayed by the chiefs of Patiala, Jind and Kaithal" (Compton, p 271)

France, had succeeded in reaching Perron up to his surrender to the English (7 September 1803) while Rene Madec was in frequent correspondence with the ministers at Paris and the governors of the French settlements in India.* Marquess Wellesley himself admitted in a letter to Lord Hobart (20th November 1803), that Perron "had not yet been formally connected with the present Government of France." [MM iii 167.]

In 1794 Pondicherry passed under English occupation and the French had not a single port left in India which could have enabled them to communicate with any Maratha court either directly or through anti-British States. In Dec. 1802 Tipu was dead, and the Nizam and the Peshwā were British vassals. Aboukir Bay had annihilated the French naval power in the Eastern waters (Aug. 1798); Napoleon's land-route to India had been closed by Sir Sidney Smith at Acre (May 1799). Napoleon's plan of smuggling a body of French trainers, munition-manufacturers, captains and gun-layers *via* Pondicherry to Sindhia's camp, came too late for Perron, and it was nipped in the bud by the alertness of the British Governor of Madras and the sagacity of Marquess Wellesley.† No French governmental force in India could have been kept supplied with reinforcements of *matériel* and provisions from Home, so long as the

* Full details of these intrigues are given with the texts of the letters in E. Barbé's extremely valuable biography, *Le Nabab René Madec* (Paris, 1894).

† On 11th July 1803, a French squadron arrived at Pondicherry from Brest, having on board General De Caen with a military force reported to number between 600 and 700 European troops. The officers were really designed for training and commanding new brigades for Sindhia, and the skilled mechanics for gun-casting and gun-laying; there was also a small corps of administrative officers to look after the supply and other interests of the projected army. On 12th July one of these ships, the *La Belle Poule* landed at Pondicherry 24 military and 9 administrative officers and 160 white soldiers out of this corps. But in the night of the 13th, De Caen suddenly sailed away with the remainder of the force, on getting secret news of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. The officers and men who had been landed were detained by the English as prisoners of war, and on 1st October the British again took over the control of Pondicherry and sent these French prisoners back to France. Lake had already stormed Aligarh fort on 4 September. MM iii 465, 659, iv 660.

English supremacy at sea was not broken,—and of breaking it there was not the faintest hope.

§ 5. *Perron's duplicity.*

Perron had been waiting to find out the best means of giving up Sindhia's service and returning to Europe with his wealth intact, when he learnt that on 7th August 1803 General Lake had begun his march with the main British army from Cawnpur towards the Maratha frontier near his headquarters at Aligarh. This forced him to make a choice between surrender and war. He had once dreamt of making an advantageous bargain like that of De Boigne in 1796, who then pocketed 1½ lakhs of Rupees by selling his Cavalry Regiment to the British. Perron now opened negotiations with General Lake for his own retirement, but lost all by his half-hearted and hesitating action. The political situation had entirely changed since the time of of De Boigne's resignation. Instead of the pacific Sir John Shore, the imperious Marquess Wellesley, in the full flush of his unbroken triumphs, wielded the government of British India. The only terms offered to Perron were the guarantee of his *proved* private property and personal safety, with a little compassionate gift from the English Company.* This put Perron on the same footing as any other European adventurer in the Marātha service who would surrender under the Governor General's proclamation. Wellesley was determined to destroy Sindhia's French-trained battalions and remove *all* their European officers. He held that such a force if allowed to remain intact would have continued as a standing menace to the security of British India and to the peace of the entire country.

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* Wellesley's instructions to Genl. Lake, 27 July 1803—"An agreement for the security of M. Perron's personal interests and property, accompanied by any reasonable remuneration from the British Government which shall induce him to deliver up the whole of his military resources and power, together with his territorial possessions, and the person of the Mughal [Emperor] into your Excellency's hands." M. Martin, iii. 221.

Even before the war broke out, General Lake converted the Governor-General to his own opinion that 'the early defeat of Perron in the field' should be the primary object of the war, in view of "the effect which this would produce on the minds of the native princes' who believed the French-trained campoo to be invincible.* Therefore Perron could have averted an armed conflict only by the unconditional surrender of himself and his vast army to the British. But apart from Daulat Rao being the lawful master of these troops, would the sepoys of his campoo have agreed to such a mass-suicide?

Perron knew that he could not stand up to the British Indian army, because all the English and Scottish officers under him had resigned, refusing to bear arms against their own country, and he had been, by his own admission, unable to enlist any competent French officers to replace them, so that his only European officers were half-castes from Goa and Pondicherry, whom he knew to be worthless. Besides this, in his private life, Perron was burdened with a sickly wife and a two-year old daughter, the sole remnant of a family of ten children, nine of whom had already fallen victims to the Indian climate in their infancy.†

Perron was determined in his heart of hearts not to fight the English, and yet with incredible cowardice and treachery, while he was secretly higgling for better terms from General Lake, he publicly made fiery declarations against the English, calling upon his lieutenant, Col. Pedron the commandant of Aligarh fort, to resist General Lake to the utmost, and promising to come himself with "a large

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* This was proved true by the event. After the flight of Perron from his camp at Koil, Lake wrote to Wellesley, on 29th August: "This day has had a most wonderful effect upon the minds of the natives, who always thought M. Perron invincible. It always was (as your Lordship knows) my opinion that the moment Perron was beat, no one would come to him." MM iii 190, 284.

† In a letter to his brother, written in March 1803, Perron gives these figures. Martineau is wrong in saying that 8 children had perished in India [Martineau, p. 184 corrected from p. 94.] His wife died on 23rd August 1804 at Chinsura aged 36, after giving birth to an eleventh child (Joseph) on 25th July.

army on the plains of Aligarh, to send back the English General as fast, or perhaps faster than he came" [MM. v. Maratha War Sup. 75-77 = iii 367-368 Letters to Perron in *As. An. Reg* for 1804, State P 258-260]

One result of Perron's cowardice and duplicity was the massacre of thousands of sepoys—men braver and more honourable than himself—who had trusted him but whom he betrayed by his flight. Another was the draining out of India of an incalculable amount of wealth by the British army as prize-money gained in war

§ 6 *Perron's treachery analysed*

Perron was no doubt a traitor,—but to Sindhia alone. He never deceived himself into the belief that his four brigades of blacks officered by mestizoes, could stand up to the British Indian army stiffened by six thousand white troops from Home,—the veterans of American and Continental warfare And yet he did not warn Daulat Rao to avoid war with the English, as De Boigne had done throughout his Indian career A man of honour would have given Sindhia this advice at the first sign of an anti-British plot being hatched at his Court, and if his advice had been rejected, he would have at once resigned Perron never really meant to fight the English, and yet he humoured Daulat Rao in pursuing a policy which was sure to lead to a fatal conflict with the British, while concealing his real intentions He clung to his post till the very outbreak of the war with the English, in order to get more time for piling up his private fortune

It was reported to Resident Collins by Sindhia's ministers in 1802 that Perron annually collected 80 lakhs from the Hindustan territory entrusted to him, but accounted for only 40 lakhs to his master Thus he made a net profit of 40 lakhs every year, to which he added his lawful salary, commission on tribute collection and other emoluments,—another gain of 18 lakhs Every month that he continued in Sindhia's service meant an increase of five

lakhs in his hoard, and from this sordid motive he ruined his master and left his soldiers in the lurch to be butchered by the English, without giving them time to train and accustom themselves to an indigenous body of commanders in the place of the mercenary foreigners who had run away. The fabulous wealth which enabled a French weaver's son to buy a seigneurie at Fresne, live as a Nawab and marry his daughters to French noblemen bearing historic names like Montesquiou, Oudinot, and Rochefoucauld was acquired by dishonourable means. His treachery was only exceeded by his cowardice.

§ 7. *Deterioration of De Boigne's army under Perron.*

The splendid army which De Boigne had shaped for Mahādji Sindhiā had undergone a great change of form and spirit in Perron's hands. It had expanded from the three brigades of 1793 to four in 1802, while a fifth was in course of formation in 1803. But it had sadly declined in quality. First, the veteran Europeans of René Madec's corps whom De Boigne had found so useful in officering his newly raised battalions, were mostly dead by 1802. The Savoyard general used to give preference to English and Scotch officers, and lived in personal amity with the British power in India. In contrast with him Perron had a Frenchman's jealousy of the English, and in 1802 his home land was at war with England. Moreover, his meanness of of character and avarice made him prefer servile lieutenants to the British subordinates who stood on their own dignity as gentlemen. Thus it came to pass that he made a purge of English and Scotch officers from his army in 1802. In some biographical notes dictated by him after his return to France he gave the following explanation of his action:

"Sindhia, wishing to reassure himself of men on whom he could count in the case of a rupture [with the English], gave me orders to administer to all his officers without distinction, the oath to serve him faithfully against all the

enemies with whom he desired or might happen to be at war, and to dismiss all who refused I sent to all the commandants an order to administer the oath demanded by the prince in their respective brigades The order was carried out in the 2nd and the 3rd brigades,—the only ones a little close to me, and nearly all the Englishmen and sons of Englishmen took their dismissal Colonel Dudrenec, however, did not administer the oath in his own brigade, fearing (as he wrote to me) to lose his officers But as the object of the prince was really to find a decent pretext for expelling them [the British officers] from his army, I enjoined on Mons Dudrenec to administer the oath strictly But after that time I did not hear of him again, nor had I any knowledge of his movements" [Martineau, 166-167]

The strength and organisation of De Boigne's corps in 1793 have been described in Chapter 11, § 7 The condition of Sindhia's European-trained army in 1802 is thus described by Perron —"The force which I commanded in the service of Sindhia consisted of four brigades, each of eight battalions Each battalion had eight companies, each company being 65 infantry in strength There was a small body of cavalry, from 2,500 to 3,000 horse, [forming the General's guard] Each brigade ought to have been commanded by a Colonel, a Major, eight captains and 16 lieutenants But the difficulty of getting reliable Europeans led to the corps of officers being rarely complete The cavalry was commanded by a captain and a lieutenant

"By reason of the difficulty in getting European officers,—above all Frenchmen, whom the English prevented, as much as lay in their power from travelling to the princes of the country, we were obliged to accept nearly every [white candidate] who presented himself And the greater number of my Majors, Captains, and lieutenants were English or the natural sons of English fathers and native women

"The four brigades were thus commanded in 1803,—the First by Colonel Pohlmann, the Second by Col George

Hessing (the Eurasian son of Col. John Hessing, a Dutchman), the Third by Louis Bourquien and the Fourth by Col. Chevalier Dudrenec. The Cavalry was under Captain Fleury. [Martineau, 165.]

"Thus every Englishman in the force . . . was debarred from superior employment, although the British subjects in the brigades numbered no less than forty. Country-borns—a very large factor in the force—who could boast a British origin, fared no better." [Compton, 277.]

There were under the Delhi Empire, two other corps affiliated to Perron's command, by virtue of Sindhia being the official commander-in-chief (*Bakhshi-ul-mamalik*) of the Emperor, but they were paid and controlled independently of Perron: these were the brigade of Jean Baptiste Filose and that of Begam Samru.

Thus it happened that when the long foreseen clash with the English at last took place, Sindhia's trained battalions were officered by Frenchmen of a low type (unlike the cultured and aristocratic Frémont or Dudrenec), uneducated Eurasian lads run away from school,* Portuguese mestizoes and even black Christians from Goa.

The description of Perron's army given by Resident Collins from information supplied by a British officer in Sindhia's service, in April 1802, refers to its sanctioned strength and not its actual muster numbers. Collins himself makes this correction in subsequent reports, such as "The battalions are very incomplete at present, both with

* James Skinner himself had received so little education that he preferred to write in Hindustani. His father could not afford to keep him in a boarding school in Calcutta. He writes that when Jaswant Holkar defeated Hessing's corps at Ujjain (17 July, 1801), "Sixteen country-born officers, who were all my school-fellows, were killed at their guns. They had all entered the service within a month of each other." [i. 171.]

The condition of Perron's Eurasian officers as seen by Bishop R. Heber in 1825:—"Scattered up and down in the towns of Koil, Alighar, and Etawa . . . were several elder persons, who had been in the Maratha service during Perron's time, of *European extraction* but who *knew no language but Hindustani*. One of these Indo-Europeans is an old Colonel, of French extraction, very rich but *completely Indian* in colour, dress, language, and ideas." (*Narrative of Journey*, 2nd ed. 1828, ii. 342.) Probably M. Pêche.

respect to European officers and sepoys. Perron's infantry brigades are not yet regularly formed into ten battalions each. Subject to the above qualification, Perron's force in April-May 1802, was reported by Collins to be made up of four brigades of infantry each of ten battalions with a bayonet strength of 716 men, four field-pieces and one howitzer to each battalion. Each brigade had, in addition to its battalion field pieces, a general park consisting of 16 large calibre guns. The *risāla* of regular cavalry (inflated by Collins's correspondent to 1,000 sabres) was supplied with galloper guns. The scale of pay for service in Northern India is given below, to which an addition of 50 p. c. (*bata*) was made when posted south of the Narmadā.—*Major* (corresponding to the modern Brigadier) Rs. 1,200 a month; Captain (*i.e.*, colonel commandant of a battalion) Rs. 400; Lieutenant (*i.e.*, company commander) Rs. 200; sepoy infantryman, Rs. 7. [*PRC.* ix. 50, 50.]

CHAPTER XLVIII

WAR PREPARATIONS OF THE ENGLISH AND THE MARATHAS, 1803

§ 1. *Maratha reaction to the Treaty of Bassein*

The Treaty of Bassein bound the English to restore Bāji Rāo II to his throne at Punā. The Governor-General performed this task by his masterly statesmanship, without having to strike a blow. He made a wise distribution of the British forces in the east, north and west, where the loosely scattered dominions of Sindhia touched the British frontier, and he won the South Maratha barons over to his side by guaranteeing the possession of their estates. Mysore, abutting into the south end of Mahārāshtra, was made a convenient depot of British arms under Arthur Wellesley. The news of these steps struck terror into Sindhiā and Bhonslé.

The Governor-General knew that the great Marātha sardārs felt an unspeakable aversion to the Treaty of Bassein, and would annul it by force if they had the least hope of success. But he also knew that Bhonsle's army was contemptible, that Sindhiā would not stand up to English troops unless he was joined by Holkar, and that a union of hearts between Sindhia and Holkar, which alone could threaten danger to the British Power and disturbance to the British protectorate of Haidarabad, was an impossibility. But, while holding firmly on to his legal position of vantage, he avoided making a declaration of war as long as possible in order to throw the guilt of aggression on Sindhiā. Daulat Rao's imbecile political manoeuvres and the cowardly selfishness of his advisers made him lose seven months in hesitation and secret intrigue, and then go to war at the wrong time, like a moth that long buzzes round

a candle and at last blindly rushes into the flame only to destroy itself.

When the news of Jaswant Rao Holkar's victory at Punā reached Ujjain, there was consternation in the Court of Daulat Rao Sindhiā. A reporter in that city wrote, "All here are stunned and taking counsel together. We are wanting in money, wanting in troops. Our forces in the Deccan, both cavalry and trained infantry, have been totally ruined. Daulat Rao has issued letters calling his detachments in Hindustan to his side as he intends to go to the Deccan in person." But his progress was so slow that even on 7th February 1803 he was still on the north bank of the Narmadā, and arrived near Burhānpur as late as the 24th of that month, exactly four months after the battle of Hadapsar. The question of restoring Bāji Rao to his throne was in agitation in his council and he appealed to the English for help in this task. But the news reached him that the Peshwā had already made a defensive alliance with the English. This meant that Sindhiā's proud office of the Peshwā's regent and protector was taken away from him by the force of circumstances which he could not control. He had invited the English as a party to the old friendly treaty of Salbāi to join him in marching to Punā and restoring Bāji Rao to his throne. Wellesley replied that the English could do that work with their unaided strength, and that the best service that Sindhiā could do to his master was to remain at peace within his own dominions and avoid every step that might disturb the Peshwā's territory. It was only on 28th May that Daulat Rao first read the terms of the momentous treaty from the Persian and Marathi translations supplied to him by the British Resident.

* The artful Bāji Rao had written to Daulat Rao from Bassein vaguely stating that he had made a friendly alliance with the English, and was sending to him an agent who would discuss the matter with Sindhiā. This envoy, Bāloji Kunjar moved so slowly that he reached Daulat Rao's camp only at the end of April, and even then he did not bring a copy of the Treaty with him. Resident Collins, who had the text and translations of the treaty with him, justly said that as Sindhiā's ministers were not prepared to discuss the treaty with him before

Sindhia's first plan was to gather as many allies as possible, march on Punā, expel Holkar's garrison from it, restore Bāji Rao, and thus recover his own ascendancy as the Peshwā's regent. Wellesley's occupation of Punā in April killed this plan. In the meantime Daulat Rao had been intriguing with Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur and trying to win Jaswant Rao Holkar as an ally in a grand Marātha confederacy to rescue the Peshwā from English vassalage and annul the Treaty of Bassein. Every move in this game was reported to the English by their numerous spies. Marquess Wellesley ordered the Resident Colonel John Collins, who reached Sindhia's camp on 27th February 1803, to demand a categorical reply from Daulat Rao whether he accepted the Treaty of Bassein or objected to it, and at the same time to invite him to join in a general subsidiary alliance with the English as his sovereign had done.

§ 2. *Daulat Rao Sindhia's hesitation and folly.*

At an interview on 24th March 1803 Sindhia's ministers admitted that there was nothing hostile to their master's interests in the Treaty of Bassein, but added that they must hear from the Peshwā directly before giving their assent to the treaty. The Peshwā's special messenger arrived at the end of April, and then Daulat Rao shifted his ground and declared that he must take counsel with the other great Maratha feudatory, Bhonsle of Nagpur, before deciding on his attitude to the treaty.

Daulat Rao's object was to gain time for completing an anti-British coalition before making a rupture with the English. It was a futile policy, considering the unbridgeable gulf between himself and Jaswant Rao Holkar, and his own blind greed in clinging to all his gains from the

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learning of the Peshwā's wishes from his expected envoy Pilaji Kunjar, he considered it useless to supply them with his copy of the treaty before Kunjar's arrival. So he supplied it only at the interview of 28th May. [MM iii 159.]

House of Holkar, till the last moment The Peshwā had gone over to English protection in November 1802, and it was 4th June 1803 before Raghuji Bhonslé joined Daulat Rao, and 9th July before the late Malhar Rao Holkar's heir was released from Sindhiā's prison and delivered to Jaswant Rao's agents By this last date Resident Collins had already presented his ultimatum But the negotiations were prolonged for three weeks more by Sindhiā making fresh but insincere proposals of a peaceful settlement At last Collins withdrew from his camp on 3rd August and the war began

The needless presence of Daulat Rao Sindhiā and Raghuji Bhonslé with two vast predatory armies at Jamner, within ten miles of the Nizām's frontier, was a standing threat to the Nizām and to his protectors the English Collins, by order of the Governor General finally called upon them to separate their forces and march back to their own capitals This ultimatum was openly rejected on 1st August, and Collins took his departure on the 3rd of that month

The different ways in which the two sides prepared for the trial by combat which they knew to be inevitable, present by their contrast a lesson of the profoundest instruction to us

The whole course of Daulat Rao Sindhiā's actions leading up to the war with the English, was marked by folly, indecision and delay, as if mere deception and theatrical demonstration could decide the fate of nations The futility of his policy was patent to all The Kotā agent in his camp reported, "Daulat Rao at first alienated General Perron, now he is flattering him He first destroys and then he has to humiliate himself (to undo the mischief) Such is the way in which he works," (7 March 1803) And again, five days later, "Sindhiā and his ministers practise only deception and lying People have lost all trust in them; they say one thing and do another No sign of their reassuring any body's mind" On 23rd June this was the

condition of their camp, "They have no strength to ascend the Ajanta pass and have no money. Here horses and men are dying of hunger; many soldiers are going away. A campaign is ahead and (yet) the scarcity is great. We know not what God has ordained for us."*

After Raghuji Bhonsle had come to Daulat Rao's camp, there were endless discussions between the two allies but no action. Jaswant Rao Holkar though appealed to for joining a pan-Maratha confederation against the English, knew the weakness of Sindhia's council and army, and had no faith in Daulat Rao's promise of restoring the Holkar possessions. So like the realist in politics that he was, he withdrew to his own capital after getting hold of his nephew, the child Khande Rao, and left Sindhia to his fate.

§ 3. *British preparations—acquisition of the north-western frontier of Oudh.*

While such incredible folly, weakness and discord paralyzed the Maratha leaders in the face of the threatened British subjugation, we find on the English side the most amazing sagacity and efficiency in preparing for the coming contest. The Governor-General, Marquess Wellesley, was a statesman of marvellous vision, organising power, and skill in choosing the fittest instruments for his purpose. His dominating will made him take the initiative, cut red tape, and seize the quickest way to success, regardless of official conventions and the frowns of the distant Home authorities.

The keynote of Wellesley's Indian policy was the destruction of "the French State now formed on the banks of the Jamuna"† as he called Perron's viceroyalty of Northern India nominally under Sindhia. In the pursuit of this

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* Repeated in a letter of 11th August, after the [illegible]: "There is an urgent need of our setting out on [illegible] but [illegible] have no money. He is daily urging, but no soldier will [illegible]. If God wishes to preserve the Brahman raj and [illegible] then only will it be well."

† MM iii 215, 211 ("an independent French State on [illegible] most vulnerable part of the Company's frontier.")

policy, framed in his mind even before he landed in India he had already extinguished Tipu Sultan and emasculated the Nizām, and thus the Marāthas stood without any possible ally The next step in his scheme was to induce the Peshwā to accept the protective vassalage of the English This proposal had been repeatedly declined by Bāji Rao II, but Holkar's victory on 25th October 1802, brought it to fulfilment before the year was out

But long before this unexpected and bloodlessly achieved success Wellesley had been perfecting his preparations for the inevitable war against Bāji Rao's overgrown feudatories and their European-led armies His first step was to create a belt of British territory on the western flank of Oudh, so as to intercept any Maratha invasion from Sindhia's part of Hindustan and also to enable British forces to penetrate into "Perron's French kingdom" without delay By a treaty forced on Nawab Sādat Ali Khan (on 10th November 1801), he secured for occupation and administration by the British the nine districts of Rohilkhand, Mainpuri, Etawa, Cawnpur, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Basti, Gorakhpur, and Farrukhabad (this last being ceded by its Bangash Nawāb a year later) This territorial gain enabled the English to make a large addition to their forces kept ready on that frontier, at the expense of the Oudh Nawab

The moral effect of this transfer was even greater than its military gain In this Ceded Province—the germ of the N W P. and U P of later times—the Indian world was given an unmistakable object-lesson of the superiority of British administration and the immense increase of the people's prosperity by the change from indigenous rule to English government A most efficient system of administration was set up in this Ceded Province, and it worked wonders in the year and a half that intervened before the outbreak of the war The first Lieutenant Governor, Henry Wellesley, was a political genius like his two brothers, Marquess Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington, and he worked with unfettered powers and liberal financial

support. Under him was placed a band of [illegible] British covenanted civil servants, picked up for their ability and knowledge of oriental languages, and they worked with the greatest zeal and success under their chief's active leadership and sympathetic support.*

It was "an unsettled and discontented province with a population greatly debased and impoverished by long years of misrule" under the Oudh Nawabs. But in a short time the banditti who had hitherto ravaged the land were effectively suppressed; guard-boats patrolled the rivers and checked the pirates who had obstructed the natural and extensive trade down the great river highway of the Jamuna and the Ganges. Periodical fairs were established to open up the different districts to mutual intercourse. The currency was reformed by restricting the minting of rupees to the two chief towns. Over-powerful zamindars, like Balwant Singh of Sāsni, who on the strength of their mud forts and armed retainers, used to enforce arbitrary exactions from travellers and traders, and withhold the proper revenue from the Nawāb's officials, were crushed by strong British detachments. A new city named Wellesleyganj, with a *ghāt*, a *sarāi*, a market-place and offices was founded within three miles of Hardwār where the British, Gurkhā and Marātha frontiers met, and thus the wilderness between Bareilly and Hardwār (200 square miles) began to be thrown open to cultivation and trade.

This pacification, effected before the outbreak of the war with Sindhiā, tempted merchants from Hāthras and other places in Sindhiā's portion of the Doab to remove with their families to the new province; a general cotton market was established at Etāwā. The city of Allahabad, from being a mere pilgrim resort, rapidly grew into a

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* In an address presented to him on the eve of his departure, they thanked him for his "liberal and unwearied endeavours and his indefatigable personal exertions in an arduous task [illegible] acquired territory where everything yet remained to be done." Asiatic Ann. Reg. for 1807, pp 17-30. *Ibid* for 1804, Sup. to Chronicle, p 11. *Diary and Correspondence of H. Wellesley*, pp 36-41.

flourishing commercial capital, where 600 new warehouses were built, and served as the chief emporium in upper India for piece-goods, sugar, opium, and raw cotton The revenue of the Ceded Districts—which had fallen from $2\frac{1}{2}$ krores in Mughal times to 135 lakhs under the Nawābi, increased by 10 lakhs after the first year of British rule, and this amount was willingly paid *

§ 4 *How General Lake trained his army for the Maratha war*

On the British side, the military preparations for the coming war were worthy of a race that deserves to win an empire, because it provides for everything that can be thought of beforehand and leaves very little to be clumsily improvised under the stress of actual conflict In Northern India the Commander-in-chief, General Lake, was in the full vigour of body and mind From his 17th year he had received the best apprenticeship in war by serving close to Frederick the Great, and since then he had gathered experience in a succession of Continental and American wars More recently he had proved himself an active and clever leader, by the ruthless energy with which he had crushed the Irish rebels of Vinegar Hill (1798) After landing in Calcutta on 31 January 1801, he set up his head-quarters at Cawnpur, then the frontier station of the Company's territory, and here he spent the winter of 1802-3 in personally training his men and officers in the new tactics that would ensure success against an enemy like the Marāthas

During winter Lake's headquarters were located at Kanauj, 50 miles north-west of Cawnpur In the vast plain on the bank of the the Ganges here, the various cavalry regiments, British and Indian, were assembled and exercised together, according to a uniform system under the eyes of

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* As H Wellesley wrote, "The farmers soon found the advantage of living under our mild system, free from the extortions and oppression to which they had before been subjected, and it is incredible how soon the country began to assume an appearance of greater prosperity" (*Diary*, p 39)

the Commander-in-chief himself throughout the winter months of 1802-1803. Chief among the exercises was the use of galloper guns,* the efficiency of which was proved shortly afterwards in this war, by the terror which they produced on the Maratha horse. "Two of these guns, six-pounders, were attached to each regiment of horse, and nothing could exceed the speed and exactness of the manoeuvres made with them at full speed by this large body of cavalry, whose combined movements were conducted with the most perfect order and in a spirit of rivalry. Such continuous training gave Lake an opportunity of testing the capacities of his officers and men, and inspiring them with much of his fearless and confident spirit." (Thorn, 80; Pearse, 151.) At the same time he won his officers' hearts by frequently joining them at table and the hunting field, while his soldiers loved and admired him for his personal touch with them, his good humour and his sharing their hardships in campaigning. His principle of war was always to attack and attack with impetuous vigour, at the same time that he maintained strict discipline in the ranks and cohesion among the different divisions. (Pearse, 152, 146, 151-154; Pester, *War and Sport*; Shipp's *Memoirs*, ch. 6-8.)

While the cavalry at Kanauj was thus preparing itself for the next war, the infantry regiments in Cawnpur, Fathgarh, and other stations in Oudh were being provided by General F. St. John with an organisation of light infantry† companies (*i.e.*, sharp shooters) similar to those introduced about the same time into the army in England. The French Revolutionary soldiers had shown what sharp-shooting light infantry could do, and that lesson was here taught to the British Indian army.

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* Galloper guns or horse-drawn light artillery were a novelty in India in those days, and were first introduced by De Boigne about 1790. The E. I. Co. took up the idea later.

† "Light infantry, that is marksmen or sharp-shooters." (Williams, *Hist. Bengal Nat. Inf.*, p. 275.) Sir John Moore drilled the Light Infantry at Shorncliffe (Lloyd's *Review of Inf.*, p. 221; Cole and Priestley, *Outline of Br. Mil. Hist.*, 2nd ed., p. 121; Pearse, p. 154.)

§ 5. *Arthur Wellesley's war preparations*

While in the north Gerard Lake was training his army by personally heading vast troop exercises and daily camaraderie with his officers in the hunting-field and dinner parties, where the wine cup overflowed till long past midnight,—in the south Arthur Wellesley was sharpening his military machine equally well but by a different method The "bleak sublimity of his genius" made him work in isolation The future conqueror of Napoleon had already discovered that "a modern army marches on its stomach" Therefore, in his earliest Indian campaign, Arthur Wellesley set himself to ensuring the food supply of his troops by organizing the famous Mysore bullock teams with as much care and success as he showed later in building up his mule transport in the Peninsular War In addition, he with tireless industry experimented and perfected the plan of using coracles (oval row-boats made of sewn hides stretched over wicker-work frames) for ferrying his troops over the rocky rivers of the south In this way he discovered the exact number of men or weight of material that each coracle could safely carry At the same time he kept his detachment commanders awake to the necessity of constantly guarding against their store of bullock-fodder catching fire

Arthur Wellesley did all this work while hampered by the absence of a staff in the real sense of the term, the slackness and sometimes obstruction of the civil Government of Bombay (on which he had to depend for most of his needs), and the large proportion of inefficient and even refractory subordinate officers whom he could not promptly punish because he had none to replace them

The Wellingtonian tactics, familiar to students of his Peninsular campaigns, were absent from his Indian battles Here was no employment of the line against the column, no sheltering of his infantry under cover while the enemy's tumultuous attack spent itself in vain by advancing over broken ground At Assaye and Argaon, Wellington himself

had to advance and attack before the enemy's fire could be subdued and the enemy columns thrown into disorder. Above all, he had no adequate staff; everywhere the general had to go in person to set a tactical move in operation instead of sending a staff officer to see it done. At Assaye a civilian like Mountstuart Elphinstone was practically his aide-de-camp throughout the fighting. The planned cohesion of the parts that characterized his battles in Europe was impossible under Indian conditions; every tactical move on his side had to be improvised then and there under the stress of the actual circumstances. And the smallness of his force, especially in cavalry, made pursuit impossible and robbed him of the chance of gaining the fullest fruits from his victory in the stricken field.

§ 6. *Marquess Wellesley's plan of war outlined beforehand*

For the coming war, everything had been foreseen and provided for by the Governor-General and his staff of highly gifted assistants with marvellous speed and efficiency. On the military side his plan was to distribute the Bengal, Madras and Bombay armies in such a way "as should enable a general and combined attack to be made as nearly as possible at the same time, on the united army of Sindhia and the Raja of Berar in the Deccan, on Perron's establishment in the Doab, and on every assailable part of the dominions of those princes in all quarters of Hindustan."* The decisive sectors were the Doab, where Perron had to be crushed, and the Deccan where Daulat Rao and Raghuji Bhonslé were present in person. Generals Lake and Arthur Welles-

* "Never before in Hindustan, and seldom even in the most renowned military nations of Europe, have so many separate armies been supplied and equipped for actual service, within the short period of four months, and with such admirable arrangement set in motion at the same time, from points so distant. ... On the plains of Delhi and amidst the mountains of the Deccan, on the shores of Cuttack and on those of Gujrat, the banners of England were to be at once displayed." *An. Reg. for 1803*, p. 37-39.

ley, who respectively commanded these two Northern and Southern main armies, were given by the Governor-General full instructions beforehand and invested with plenary powers to conduct the military operations and all diplomatic negotiations and settlements necessary for the fulfilment of the main object General Lake being within nine days' postal communication with Calcutta, Marquess Wellesley had discussed the British policy and plans to the minutest detail with him and wisely yielded to the soldier's view that the first task of the British army must be the destruction of Perron's forces and not the securing of the blind old Emperor's person and capital to which the Governor-General had at first wished to give priority General Arthur Wellesley being three times as distant from Calcutta as Lake, and communication with him being very likely to be interrupted by enemy action, the Marquess had invested him with almost dictatorial authority for war and peace within his own sphere Thus no loophole was left for delay or indecision in the operations by any need of referring to a distant superior authority

Lord Wellesley's original plan was to strike early and conclude the war before rainy season started (in July) For this his arrangements were completed and the various British divisions posted near their points of attack, fully supplied with provisions and transport, and made ready for prompt action, during the months of March to June 1803 But Daulat Rao spun the negotiations with Resident Collins, and the Marquess, too, delayed showing his mailed fist, as he clung to a faint hope that war might not after all be necessary and that Sindhia would see reason and enter into the general system of protective subsidiary alliances on which Wellesley had set his heart That hope finally faded away on 1st August 1803, when Sindhia gave Collins a declaration of war. The news of the rupture of peace reached the Governor-General in Calcutta on the 28th of that month, and the war-machine so carefully prepared by the English was at once started

§ 7 *Seduction of Sindhia's officers and sepoys*

Even before the war with Sindhia was known to be a certainty, Marquess Wellesley had made his arrangements for seducing the only elements of strength in the Maratha armies, namely their European officers and the Hindustani sepoys. Early in July, almost two months before the news of the rupture of the peace by Sindhia reached him, he had drawn up proclamations for luring away these officers and sepoys from Sindhia's army, and he had sent the proclamations in advance to the Generals Lake and Arthur Wellesley who commanded the two vitally important theatres of the coming war. These documents were to be kept secret till the actual outbreak of the war, and then published, so that not a day might be lost in their reaching the enemy camps near these two British Generals.

In North India, the Marquess very early discussed with General Lake a secret plan for making personal contact with Perron through Sutherland (a Scotsman in Sindhia's service who had married the daughter of Madame Perron's brother), and buying him out of India, but the plan was abandoned for the time, as the commander-in-chief insisted on first destroying Perron's army in the field, for the sake of the tremendous moral effect which such a victory would produce on the Indian public. George Hessing, who held the fort of Agra for Sindhia, was to be seduced through the Scotsman Sutherland (his maternal uncle's son-in-law), and Mr. Thomas Longcroft, an English indigo planter settled in the Aligarh district since De Boigne's time, was sent into Aligarh fort to seduce Col. Pedron. In all these matters, General Lake, as the man on the spot was given full discretion and a blank cheque for the expenses he might find necessary. [MM. iii. 190-193.]

§ 8 *Begam Samru secretly won over by the English*

The next step in Wellesley's scheme was to draw the allies and vassals of Sindhia away from his side. This was a very easy task, because Marātha rapacity and want of states-

manship had created a host of enemies among their agents and feudatories in North India The first and foremost among these was the widowed Begam Samru of Sardhānā As an imperial fief-holder, her army was legally under the orders of Sindhia, by virtue of his office as the Bakhshi of the Empire But she was eager to preserve her independent status in relation to Sindhia's viceroy of Hindustan, and her treasure, both of which had been threatened by Perron and Ambaji Inglé in concert in 1801 Moreover, as a Christian she had long maintained friendly relations with the British During her love-intrigue with Levassoult (1795) she had tried to flee for refuge in British Indian territory More recently she had sent to Wellesley an application to be taken under British protection with a guarantee for her *jāgir*. The only question for the Governor-General was how to save her from Sindhia's vengeance if she declared for the English or her treasonable correspondence was discovered before Perron's army had been defeated Four out of her eight trained battalions (all under European officers) were now attached to Sindhia's army in the Deccan and therefore surrounded by enemies far from home The Governor-General therefore wrote to his brother in the Deccan "to contrive means to enable those battalions to join General Wellesley." The course of the battle of Assaye showed how the contrivance worked.

§ 9. *Ambāji Inglé's cowardice and treachery*

Among the Sindhian deputies in North India the foremost in wealth and political position and second only in military strength, was Ambāji Inglé As Mahādji Sindhia's Agent-General in Mewār for eight years, he had amassed a fortune which was said to have exceeded a krore and a half. He also held the subahdāri of the Sindhian province south of Agra and including the whole of Mālwā, which had an annual revenue of 80 lakhs. After the dismissal of Lakhwā Dādā, (1800), he had been made Daulat Rao's viceroy of Hindustan. In fact, as the British Resident observed in

October 1799, "Ambaji is rather a subsidiary chief than a servant. He maintains in his own immediate pay a force nearly equal to that of Sindhia in Hindustan; he possesses immense personal wealth, and farms about a krore of Sindhia's revenue, having Gwalior and other strong places in his custody . . . Thus powerful, he is suspected of entertaining views of independence at the expense of Daulat Rao."*

And now, when in July 1801, Perron was appointed Sindhia's subahdār of Delhi, with all the seven great forts of Hindustan in his hands, Ambaji bitterly resented "the disgraceful and dangerous situation in which the old ministers and principal sardārs of Mahādji have been reduced in consequence of the extraordinary powers vested in Perron—who does what he pleases in the government of the Mahārājā." In October 1801, when Marquess Wellesley was on a visit to Fathgarh, Ambāji sent a secret agent to meet him with the request that the English chief would prevail on Daulat Rao to restore the old ministers of Sindhia to their former dignities by expelling "the faithless nation" (the French, *daghā-bāz*). At this time Ambaji begged Resident Collins to grant him an asylum in the Company's territories, "it being his unalterable resolution to relinquish all employ under Daulat Rao while Frenchmen continued in his service." (*PRC.* ix. 31.)

Ambāji had rendered no satisfactory account of his revenue and tribute collection in Sindhia's districts for many years. As his master was beset by the clamour of his unpaid soldiery and other creditors, Sindhia's diwāns began to press Ambāji for payment. In August 1799 Sindhia demanded 117 lakhs as his due, and even ordered Perron to seize Ambāji's person should it be necessary to enforce pay-

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* *PRC.* viii, No. 37. In *ib.* No. 123 (4 March 1799)—"Ambaji collects 80 lakhs out of the annual revenue of Sindhia's possessions; out of his collection he pays only 22 lakhs into Sindhia's treasury, the residue being accounted for in the pay of troops, repair of forts and other charges, for the most part highly exorbitant." Mewar collection, Tod, i. Mewar, Ch. xvii. Ojha ii. pp. 683-686.

ment. As the pressure increased, Ambāji became eager to take refuge in Benares (24 June 1802) Thus it came about that when in July 1803, Marquess Wellesley and General Lake were maturing their plans for fomenting desertion among Daulat Rao's generals, they had good reason for hoping that in view of "the ill terms Ambāji and his brother are on with Sindhia and his Minister (Jādo Bhāskar), if left unmolested, they would remain quiet, and as they formerly wished to form an alliance with the English to guard themselves from the grasping ambition of Sindhia, they might be brought over to our interest" (*PRC* viii. 163 ix 64 MM iii 192.)

Finally, after the war had raged for a month, Ambāji opened secret negotiations with the British for saving his personal estates and wealth by the surrender of his forces At the end of September 1803, he sent Ināmullah, the news-writer of Resident Collins posted in his camp, as his envoy to General Lake for the express purpose of communicating to the Commander-in-chief his proposals for consolidating his interests with those of the Company. In reply the Governor General empowered Lake, in a letter dated 19th October, "to guarantee Ambāji in the fullest independent possession of such territory as may be assigned to him, without exacting from him any revenue or tribute whatever, except a subsidy proportioned to the military aid which he might contract for" The British, however insisted on the following conditions, hence no bargain was struck·

(*i*) The Rānā of Gohad's territories which Mahādji had seized and which now lay in Ambāji's charge, were to be restored to the Rānā

(*ii*) Gwalior fort and the passess leading to the Deccan were to be garrisoned by British troops

(*iii*) No European was to be kept in Ambāji's service

(*iv*) Ambāji must co-operate with the English forces in the *present* or any future contest with the Marātha Power. (MM iii. 192, 409-411)

How could such a man fight, heart and soul, against the English in his master's cause? But Ambaji Ingle sank to the lowest depth of cowardice and villainy when at Laswari (1st November 1803), he sent his sepoys on to battle, only to be butchered by the thousand while he himself remained safe in the rear and made his escape at the first opportunity. If he had made up his mind to come to terms with the English, why did he not make an armistice with General Lake at the outset, and stop any hostile demonstration by his own troops against the approaching British line?* On the eve of this battle and even during the noon-tide lull between the first and second stages of the fighting, he higgled to get from Lake better terms for his desertion,—trying to retain as much of his territory and artillery as possible under a British guarantee. He did not form any plan of battle or retreat, and yet he did not keep his army back from opening fire on the English troops. By his selfish treachery and cowardly indecision, he doomed thousands of more honourable men to a futile destruction. It was only fitting, that his reward at the hands of the English was the loss of everything of his own, except a small estate, and that too held subject to Sindhia's will and pleasure!

As for the allies whom Wellesley planned to secure among Sindhia's minor political dependents, they hardly counted for much. The Rajput Rajas were useless as friends or foes, though they were approached by letters. "The chiefs of Bundelkhand are so divided and torn into factions, that it will be easy to secure one party." The dispossessed Jat prince of Gohad was set up against his hereditary enemy the House of Sindhia, as we have seen. Lake knew that "The Rajput and Jāt Rajas are disgusted with the Marātha rule. .... The defeat of Perron would be the signal for a

* In Lake's despatches the Maratha leader at Laswari is called *Abaji*, which can easily be a Persian scribe's mistake for *Ambaji*. Though Ambāji Inglé was in charge of Sindhia's battalions sent to N. India, it is not certain that he was personally present at Laswari. G. Duff could not "ascertain who the officer called Abaji was", and suggests that he was "perhaps one of Ambaji Inglé's *Karkun*." [iii. 233.]

general defection of all these chiefs from the Marātha interests" Thus the diplomatic isolation of Sindhia was completed (MM iii. 192, 228, 229, 243, 409-411.)

§ 10 *Governor-General's proclamations to Sindhia's troops*

The day after receiving news of Sindhia's declaration of war, Marquess Wellesley published (on 29th August) two long-prepared proclamations· By the first of them all British subjects were called upon to give up the service of Sindhia, Bhonslé or any other enemy chief and deliver themselves up to the British military officers nearest to them, in return they were promised from the E I Co a provision equal to their actual pay and allowances in the Marātha army. All subjects of France or any other foreigner, European or American, in the service of the hostile Marātha Powers were promised the continuation of their existing pay and allowances if they surrendered to the English By a supplementary proclamation issued on 16th September, all British subjects continuing in the enemy's armies after the 1st of November, were threatened with prosecution for treason.

By the second proclamation of 29th August, all natives of British India or the Oudh Nawāb's dominions, employed in the military service of the hostile Maratha chiefs were called upon to resign and deliver themselves up to British officers, on promise of employment in the E I Co's army, or of being given a provision equal to their pay in the Marātha army (*As An Reg* for 1804, State papers, p 276, MM v. 73)

Thus the ground was cut away from under the armed strength of Sindhia by the withdrawal of his European officers —who were the only higher officers in his trained brigades— and also his best infantry, who were *Purbiās* or men of Oudh and "the Upper Provinces," while the indigenous Marāthas supplied only the enemy's cavalry At the same time, the army of the E. I. Co was greatly increased by the addition

of the large subsidiary forces, under British officers, paid for by Oudh, Mysore, Haidarabad, and the Peshwa's Government, without their cost being thrown on the English Company.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE ANGLO-MARATHA WAR OF 1803

§ 1 *General Lake routs Perron's army at Koil, 29th August 1803*

In the Anglo-Maratha duel for the lordship of India which was fought out in 1803, the decisive fields were only two,—the Gangā-Jamunā Doab, where General Lake was opposed to Perron, and the North-Godavari valley where Arthur Wellesley confronted Daulat Rao Sindhia. All the other theatres of war, such as Gujrat, Orissa and Bundelkhand, were subsidiary to these two, and did not affect the main issue.

We shall survey Lake's operations first, because he achieved decisive success for the British arms before Arthur Wellesley won his first battle. During the months of June and July 1803, the Governor-General had discussed the war with Lake by correspondence, fully instructed him about his policy and plans, and invested the commander-in-chief with supreme authority in war and diplomacy for every conceivable contingency. Lake's headquarters were at Cawnpur, about 185 miles from Perron's capital Aligarh. Determined to strike the first blow, the British General left Cawnpur on 7th August for the Maratha frontier on the north-west, and on the 25th of that month reached Sikandra-Rao, 160 miles distant, from which Aligarh was only 24 miles in a straight line. Here he next day received a letter from the Governor-General authorising him to attack Sindhia's forces unless in the meantime he should hear from General Wellesley that Sindhia in the Deccan had made peace. But six days before this Lake had received a despatch from Collins reporting the final rupture of the peace in Sindhia's camp on 1st August. The British commander-in-chief now saw his course clear before him, and immediately resumed

his march against Perron, reaching Bijegarh next day (the 27th), from which Aligarh was only 11 miles distant. The day following, the grand army arrived at Nanow from which the dome of the mosque at Koil could be seen, five miles to the northward. That night orders were issued for crossing the frontier and attacking Perron's camp.

The British Indian army, like a high-spirited hound so long straining at the leash, sprang forward immediately on being let loose, eager to win glory and wealth by facing danger and death. The boundless enthusiasm and perfect condition of all ranks of Lake's force comes out most vividly as we read the diary of Lieutenant John Pester, the Quarter-master of his fourth infantry Brigade. (*War and Sport in India, 1802-1806*, ed. by Devenish.)

A glance at the map of India naturally suggests that the Maratha troops had the great strategic advantage of operating on short inner lines, because Sindhia's dominions lay in the centre of the country, while the British forces were dispersed along the outer margin of the circle. It should have been easier for the Marathas to concentrate their full strength on any threatened point. But this favour of geography was nullified by the imbecility of the master and the treachery of his servants. The folly and slackness of the leaders left the unfortunate soldiers of the campoo to fight the English in dispersed bodies and to be everywhere defeated in detail. The greatest mischief done by Perron was that he selfishly removed the best and most seasoned battalions of his army far from the expected point of attack by Lake, so that no resistance worthy of the importance of Aligarh fort and arsenal could be offered there at the very outset of the campaign. The moral damage inflicted by his defeat here was incalculable.

Perron had early notice of Lake's march upon Aligarh, but he never thought of offering the best possible defence there. On the contrary he detached two of his best brigades to Delhi and seven battalions of another to Agra, thus denuding the Doab frontier of troops. Only two thousand

sepoys of a miscellaneous character, militiamen rather than regular soldiers, were left to garrison the vitally important depot of Aligarh Skinner noticed with grief how Sindhia's cause was ruined by Perron and other French officers, whose sole aim was to ensure their safe retirement to the British dominions with their personal wealth by throwing their deluded troops into helpless destruction

The city of Koil stands a mile south of the fort of Aligarh, whose name it has taken under the British administration A broad avenue of shady trees joins the city to the fort-gate (south-eastern corner) A low marshy tract cut by this causeway, guards the fort on its southern and eastern faces Another and more extensive morass stretches east of the avenue Perron's troops, almost entirely made up of cavalry, were encamped on the open plain east of the fort with their face to the second marsh lying on their south Thus the direct dry route for approaching them was through the head of the shady avenue at the northern end of Koil The fort-guns were trained on this line of advance

But General Lake, coming up from the south, sighted Perron's army about nine in the morning of the 29th of August. Avoiding the trap laid against a frontal attack, he left the town of Koil on his west, swerved to the east, skirting the southern and eastern edges of the big marsh, and struck Perron's army at its extreme left flank Already as soon as his manœuvre was seen to develop, Perron's horsemen had broken up and begun a hurried retreat towards the fort. The only opposition offered to the English came from a high village beyond the extreme left of Perron's lines, where an outlying picquet of irregular infantry fired random shots from their matchlocks But the obstacle was quickly overcome, and the village was stormed by the British sepoys Here Lake's army suffered their only casualties of the day, less than a dozen men and no officer

The English force advanced, the cavalry leading and the infantry following in two lines No resistance was

effected. "General Perron, as some prisoners afterwards reported to the British, was the first to fly." His deserted horsemen, in their wild flight towards the fort, fell by the hundred from the fire of the galloper guns of Lake's cavalry. 'The enemy were so numerous that every shot did execution,' as Pester noticed. Perron's entire field army disappeared westwards, without entering the fort.

The field being clear, the British army moved steadily on to the shady avenue, and there coming within range of the fort-guns, turned south-west and halted west of the town of Koil, beyond the reach of the artillery in Aligarh. Thus Lake had travelled along the entire length of a hairpin loop round the big marsh, without any loss, by keeping out of the range of the enemy's heavy guns of position.

The effect of Lake's victory on the Indian world was electric. In three hours' time the French military prestige in India had been destroyed and Perron publicly shown to be a coward. His Indian allies and vassals now took heart to abandon his side. The white rats hastened to leave Sindhia's sinking ship and come over to the British to surrender and share in the Governor-General's promised bounty to deserters.

§ 2. *The storming of Aligarh, 4th September.*

From 29th August to 3rd September, Lake sat down before Aligarh, trying to take the fort by negotiation and thus avoid bloodshed. Inside Aligarh the garrison was divided in mind. The commandant, Col. Pedron, an aged Frenchman, and a few of his men wanted to make terms with the English, but the majority of the sepoys were high-spirited Rajputs and Ruhelas, soldiers by hereditary calling, who refused to stain their honour by admitting defeat without striking a blow. There was only one other French officer in the fort, but he escaped to the English camp on the 1st of September. "The garrison putting themselves under the command of Baji Rao, a Bhadauriya Rajput (?), confined

the Colonel and resolved to defend the fort."* This internal discord hindered the completion of the defence works such as carrying a mine under the causeway, flooding the environs by cutting the bank and joining two marshes together, &c. And General Lake struck before these steps could be taken. On 1st September a French deserter from the fort told him all about the disorder within, and next day, Captain Lucan, an Irishman, after resigning Sindhia's service, arrived at Koil from Delhi. He knew the ins and outs of Aligarh and undertook to guide the British storming party through the fort. Lake's plans were quickly matured, and at midnight between the 3rd and 4th of September, his troops were warned to be in readiness to deliver the assault next morning.

De Boigne and Perron had set their European engineers to make the fortress of Aligarh impregnable. The walls formed a polygon, having at each angle a round bastion with a *fausse-braie* (earth wall in front) and well provided with cannon. Outside this defence was a ditch, about 100 feet in width, thirty feet deep, and covered with ten feet of water. Across the ditch there was no passage except by a causeway which they had recently blocked by a breast-work with three six-pounders mounted on it.

Colonel Monson was appointed to lead the assault, at the head of four companies of the 76th Regiment of British infantry and three times that number of sepoys, with one full battalion of Indian infantry as support. Scaling ladders and two twelve-pounder guns for breaking the gates accompanied this force. They started from their camp, west of Koil, at 3 o'clock in the morning and by a semi-circular detour to the right, concealed their advance from the eyes of the garrison under the screen of the double line of trees

* Fraser, *Skinner*, i. 265. The garrison was composed of a regular battalion, 800 strong, commanded by Mir Sadat Ali, one thousand Bhadauria Rajputs, 500 Mewatis, &c.,—*i.e.*, mostly like militia men or *sehbandi* musketeers. Atkinson (ii. 493) "garrisoned by about 2,000 men."

of the avenue Arrived within 100 yards of the fort gate they waited in silence for the signal to attack

At break of day, the signal gun was fired, the covering batteries began to bombard the enemy's defences, and the stormers rushed to the assault The first obstacle, a breast-work across the causeway, a hundred yards before the gate, was found deserted by the defenders Monson made for the first gate, but now the garrison had taken the alarm, the half-moon batteries which flanked the gateway began to shower death on the invading column, and the whole face of the fort was lit up by the fire of their cannon and musketry The attempt to scale the wall with ladders was boldly defeated by the enemy's pikemen standing on the top So, a twelve-pounder was called up to breach the gate, but in the hurry it fell into a ditch near the entrance It was fully twenty minutes before the second twelve-pounder could arrive and smash the gate During all this time the halted storming column was subjected to a most severe raking fire of musketry, grape, and canister shot from all sides at close range As an officer present at the scene wrote, "At this time it was that we lost so many of our officers and men The sortie (passage before the gate) became a perfect slaughter-house But nothing could exceed the determined gallantry with which our troops struggled under this most destructive fire The enemy, too, fought desperately, and many of them actually stepped out upon our own ladders, which were planted against the wall, to meet our men ascending But British valour prevailed, and when two rounds from the leading gun opened the outer gate, our troops rushed in, and the slaughter among the enemy, in their turn, became very great" [Pester, 155]

Thus forcing an entrance the stormers advanced, under constant fire from the walls, to the second and the third gates, Lucan showing the way These two were easily entered, the retreating enemy being too confused to make a stand Then the column came up before the fourth gate

which led into the inner quadrangle No gun could smash it, but Major Macleod, who was leading the assault, after Monson had been dangerously wounded, boldly entered through the wicket in this gate, ascended the rampart and followed by his men drove the enemy back The resistance soon after died out, and the fortress of Aligarh, so long deemed impregnable, was conquered by British arms in an hour's time. Some of the garrison who submitted were permitted to depart in safety The majority tried to escape, but perished in the attempt, great numbers leaped into the ditch, many of whom were drowned, and even those who swam to the plain outside were cut up by a picquet of the 27th Dragoons, as the British soldiers had received orders to spare none The Maratha loss was estimated at two thousand men, "the surrounding ditch being almost filled with dead bodies"

Col Pedron saved himself by surrendering The highest Maratha officer Baji Rao, who was next in command, was killed and two other Indian sardars were taken prisoners The storming party was allowed three hours to plunder the fort, and seized several tumbrils loaded with treasure [Pester, 157]

It was a glorious victory, but purchased at a heavy price The British casualties were 260, out of whom 109 were Europeans and 151 sepoys Among the officers were one captain and five lieutenants killed, besides one subahdar, eleven European officers were wounded, including the leaders of the assaulting column

The gain of the victors was almost incalculable this success threw into their hands "most of the military stores belonging to the French party, who had made this their grand depot in the Doab The number of guns taken amounted to 281 There were besides, in the fort, large supplies of powder and shot, a number of new arms and accoutrements, and a considerable stock of regimental jackets" [Thorn, 101]

§ 3. *General Perron's ignoble end*

After his cowardly flight from the advancing British army at Koil without striking one blow, Perron wrote from the way (on 1st September) two lying letters to Colonel Pedron, urging him for the honour of the French nation, never to make terms with General Lake, but defend Aligarh obstinately as he (Perron) "hoped in a few days to send back the English General as fast as, or perhaps faster than he came." He assured Pedron that in a few days a vast army sent by him would arrive on the plain of Aligarh, and that Ranjit Singh of Lahore "had crossed the Satlaj with an army of 25,000 men and would join Perron in 14 or 15 days." All this time the Indian world knew that Ranjit Singh had definitely rejected Perron's proposal for an anti-British alliance. [*As. An. Reg.* for 1804, State P. 258-260. *PRC.* ix. 65A.]

The defender of Aligarh and his men knew the exact worth of Perron's words. That craven General's one thought now was how to withdraw his family and treasure from Agra and escape to British protection without being hindered by his deluded troops. This he effected by bribery and lying. His former subordinate James Skinner tells the story thus: Perron after fleeing from Aligarh, had removed his family and effects from Agra to Mathurā, where he himself was, with his bodyguard of 800 cavalry mounted from his own stable and 500 Mewātis. Here 4,500 horsemen of Fleury's corps joined him after the failure of their raid in the Doab. On learning of Bourquien's revolt in Delhi, Perron had recourse to a stratagem. He told the cavalry that he would go immediately to Delhi and punish Bourquien for his treachery. Distributing three lakhs of rupees among the risāladārs for their troopers, he crossed the Jamunā that evening with his bodyguard, telling them to follow next morning. . . ." Perron after crossing to the east bank . . gave the Mewātis Rs. 5,000 desiring them to keep the boats in their own hands during the night, instead of re-

turning them to the west bank for ferrying the cavalry over But he made a forced march of 20 *kos* in the night and reached Sāsni in the morning, whence he wrote to General Lake that he had resigned Sindhia's service, and begged for a safe passage home through the British territory [Fraser, i 272-274]

The entire course of Perron's duplicity will become clear from the following dates

20 Aug 1803 General Lake received a letter from Perron expressing surprise at the advance of the British army from Cawnpur towards the Maratha frontier, and giving a hint of his desire to effect some arrangement by which a conflict with the British might be averted

27 Aug Lake received another letter from P stating his anxious wish that some means might be adopted for avoiding the extremity of war

28 Aug Lake received another letter from Perron, proposing to depute his aide-de-camp, Mr Bekett to the British General for "affording further explanation" Lake agreed.

29 Aug Mr Beckett waited on Lake in the morning of 29th Aug., while the British army was actually marching upon Aligarh He repeated P's determination not to retire from Maratha service until he should be relieved by his successor Lake replied that P might avoid hostilities only by prompt and unconditional surrender and thus save his personal property

6 Sept. Lake received a letter from P. renewing his application for permission to retire to Lucknow through the Co's territories He stated as the cause of his application the information which he had received of the appointment and approach of his successor [Ambāji Inglé] Lake complied with the request, and Perron with his family and attended by Beckett and Fleury, was admitted with due honour to the Company's territory on the 8th [MM v. 75-77 = iii. 367-368]

§ 4. *Disruption of Sindhia's army in Delhi; Louis Bourquien's revolt*

Two tasks had been set before General Lake when he entered on this war. The first was achieved within a week of his crossing the frontier when he destroyed Perron's military power by taking Aligarh. This success was promptly followed up by turning to his second object, the possession of Delhi and the Mughal Emperor. Starting from Aligarh on 7th September, he received that very day a letter from Perron, begging for an asylum in British territory as he had resigned Sindhia's service. The prayer was at once granted, and Lake, thus relieved in mind about the head of the French party, pushed on towards the Mughal capital, reaching Sikandrabad, 50 miles from Aligarh on the 9th.

Here he received the most encouraging news; there was a civil war among Perron's officers in Delhi and a mutiny of their sepoys against their selfish and treacherous French commanders. Perron's original plan was to concentrate his troops at Mathurā, bring the Emperor to that camp and make him sign and seal letters agreeing to take from the Government of France a subsidiary force which would be paid for by the cession of the Doab to France in full sovereignty, exactly on the model of the subsidiary treaties by which the English had created their empire in Bengal, Oudh, and the Deccan. This would give legal validity to Perron's position under international law. Perron sent tents, elephants, horses, escort and money to Delhi for the Emperor's journey to Mathurā, and wrote to Louis Bourquien, the commander of his brigade in the Delhi district, to induce the Emperor to start on his march at 1 P.M. on 4th September. But Bourquien now repudiated Perron's authority and set himself up as an independent agent of Sindhia. In the night before the appointed day, he threw down the tents erected for the Emperor, looted all the property in that camp, and next morning struck the Emperor's flag, unfurled Sindhia's, and proclaimed himself comman-

der-in-chief, under a salute of 21 guns. Then he plundered the city of Delhi and the public treasury in it. His one aim was to pile up as much money as he could in a short time, and carry it home by going over to the English.

Major Geslin, whom Perron had detached with the second brigade to reinforce Bourquien and escort the Emperor to Mathurā, on arriving at Delhi on 3rd September, was thrown into confinement by the new commander-in-chief. Next day, when Perron's vakil (foreign secretary and envoy) Harsukh Rāi waited on Bourquien to convey his master's message, he was dismissed with the curt reply, "Your master is nobody now. I am all in all here." Meantime two couriers of the English had reached Delhi with the Governor-General's letters addressed to the adjutant of each battalion there, tempting them to desert to the English with their men.

Bourquien called upon Drugeon, the qiladār, to deliver to him the palace and the treasure in it. The honest Savoyard refused, and then Bourquien planting a battery of six guns began to bombard the Red Fort (9th Sept.). The Emperor, in fear of this second Ghulām Qādir at his gate, sent off a messenger to Lake informing him of the disorder among the troops in Delhi and begging him to come to his rescue.

Sindhia's troops in Delhi were in a state of indescribable ferment. At last they rose against their deceitful foreign captains and compelled them to march out for fighting the English instead of surrendering like cowards, or effecting their own escape from Delhi.

Perron heard this story from the faithful Major Geslin who had been sent to Delhi. "Bourquien found that he could save his private fortune and escape only by surrendering to the English, a thing which was well nigh impossible without sacrificing his army to his cupidity. So, now, in order to be able to flee without danger, he led the army to believe that he wanted to fight the English, and made his troops cross the river on the 11th of September and attack

the English. But from the commencement of the action, he and the officers who had sided with him in his revolt took to flight and ultimately gave themselves up as prisoners to the English. Their army, being betrayed and abandoned by its chief and his officers, was easily defeated. [Martineau, 173.]*

§ 5. *Battle of Patparganj (Delhi): defeat of Bourquien, 11th September.*

Inspired by the news of his enemy's confusion, General Lake hurried his advance and after marching 18 miles in one day, crossed the Hindan rivulet about five miles east of Patparganj, a large village six miles south of Delhi, but on the left bank of the Jamunā. Arrived here at 11 A.M. on the 11th of September, his tired soldiers set to pitching their camp, while their picquets advanced to reconnoitre. It was then suddenly discovered that the Maratha army from Delhi had taken post only a mile and a half from the new British camp.

Lake advanced with his entire cavalry force of three regiments—the 27th Light Dragoons and two Sepoy regiments—and found the enemy occupying a formidable position, on a rising ground, in full force and complete order of battle. Their long line had each flank covered by a swamp and their rear rested on three high villages from Patparganj in the south-west to Ghāzipur in the north-east. A line of entrenchments mounted with numerous artillery, defended their front, the whole of which was concealed by a high grass jungle.†

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* That battle was delivered to Lake on the initiative of the sepoys in Delhi is also the testimony of Pester, who notes in his Diary, "The enemy felt so confident of the effect of their artillery, that it was said their officers could not restrain them, and that they were resolved to decide the contest on the Doab side of the Jamuna." [*War and Sport*, 172.] James Skinner, who was present at Aligarh at this time, reported that Sindhia's troops in Delhi, "finding that Bourquien was a friend of Perron, put him in confinement, and one of the native commandants named Sarwar Khan, taking the command, twelve battalions crossed the Jamunā" to Patparganj. [Fraser, i. 275.]

† The *Kāns* or *Saccharum spontaneum*, growing 12 to 15 feet high.

As the British cavalry came up, the enemy opened a heavy fire which revealed the exact extent of his lines Lake clung to his position in front of the enemy and called up his infantry and guns from the camp two miles in the rear They took an hour to arrive, and during this enforced halt the British cavalry suffered heavy losses in men and horses Lake's own horse was shot under him

The veteran British commander saw that a frontal attack on such a position was impossible Therefore, making a feint, he ordered his cavalry to retire towards their camp in the rear This risky manœuvre was carried out with the utmost order and regularity The enemy, shouting in exultation that the English were beaten, rushed out of their entrenchments But in the meantime, Lake's infantry had come up from the camp, his cavalry ceased to fall back, and turning to the right, made room for the infantry, who pressing to the front formed the first line of battle The cavalry took post in the second line, forty yards to the right rear

The entire British force of 4,500 men—of whom only one-third of the cavalry and one-eighth of the infantry were Europeans and the rest Indians,—marched against the enemy in the face of a tremendous fire of round, grape and chain shot from nearly 80 guns But such was their steadiness that their infantry advanced as if on parade, without taking their muskets from their shoulders, till they came within a hundred paces of the enemy Then the order to charge was given, the infantry fired a volley, the drums struck up, and amidst the ringing cheers of the troops, they rushed upon the enemy, Lake as usual riding before them Sindhia's infantry did not wait to face the bayonets flashing under the noonday sun, but fled away in all directions The enemy's first line was captured

Then the British infantry stopped, and broke into columns of companies, through the intervals of which the whole body of their cavalry with their galloper guns pressed forward and drove the enemy back to the bank of the

Jamuna, where large numbers of the fugitives perished in trying to cross the river "The Flying Artillery was up, and the river appeared boiling by the fire of grape kept up on those of the enemy who had taken to the river It was literally, for a time, a stream of blood" [Pester, 167]

The pursuit was kept up till sunset, when the field was cleared of all but the dead and the dying and the abandoned artillery and stores of the enemy Only two battalions of the defeated army managed to escape destruction and rallied at Tapal

It was a splendid victory, it completed the work begun at Aligarh by destroying Perron's entire field army But a heavy price had to be paid for it The British Indian force had marched 18 miles, had been under arms for over 16 hours continuously on an intensely hot day and fought a far larger army of men holding a strongly prepared position with numerous heavy artillery, to which the British could oppose only light gallopers The loss of the victors was 47 officers and 414 other ranks, a total of 461 men (out of whom 116 were Europeans), besides 170 horses

§ 6 *Shah Alam II comes under British protection, 16th September*

The battle of Patparganj was witnessed from the ramparts of Delhi, and as soon as the result became clear, the old Emperor Shah Alam sent a messenger to congratulate General Lake on his victory and ask him to come and deliver him from Maratha control by placing him under British protection Lake agreed, for this was the first object of the Governor-General in the war On 14th September the British army crossed over to the Delhi side by the bridge of boats on the river which Bourquien had left undestroyed

[1] "About three-quarters of a mile from the village-site [Patparganj] is the spot marked out by a surrounding ditch where in 1803 the Battle of Delhi was won by Lord Lake There is a monument on the spot to the memory of Cornet Sanguine and others who fell" (Atkinson, iii 419) "Major Middleton (3rd Bengal Cav), Cornet Sanguine (27th L Dragoons) and several European soldiers fell from the effect of the sun" (Lake to G G 12 Sep 1s *An Reg* for 1803, App 11

in order to win the favour of the English General Lake paid his first visit to the Emperor in the afternoon of the 16th, marching in state amidst the jubilation of the populace of the capital In the palace the scene of his audience with the King of Kings was pathetic beyond words As an officer of Lake's army writes "The descendant of the great Akbar and Aurangzib was found blind and aged, stripped of authority and reduced to poverty, seated under a small tattered canopy, the fragment of regal state and the mockery of human pride"* The British Government adopted the necessary measures for the support of the imperial family and the security of the capital with its dependencies The exact terms of this political arrangement will be described in connection with the treaty with Sindhia in December

The five French chiefs of the Maratha army in Delhi,— Louis Bourquien, Major Geslin, Major Guerinnier, Del Perron and Jean Pierre, surrendered to the British army on the 14th and were sent away to Calcutta "Such was the general feeling of the people of Delhi that the French party, after evacuating the city and forts, found themselves under the necessity of soliciting British protection, from the effects of popular resentment" [Thorn, 118, *As An Reg* for 1803, App 13]

§ 7 *The fall of Agra, 18th October*

After making arrangements for the defence of Delhi and the adjoining district, General Lake left the Mughal capital on 24th September and set out for Agra That city had been the real capital of Sindhia's north-Indian dominions In its historic fort were stored vast quantities of munitions, stores, equipment and artillery, besides 22½ lakhs of public money in specie Its defence had been left to Colonel George Hessing, a Dutch mestiche and Col Sutherland a Scotsman, both related to Perron by marriage Their

* Thorn, 125

one aim was to save their personal wealth and earn Wellesley's promised reward by deserting to the English. As Skinner, their late comrade-in-arms, cynically remarks, "Hessing was too rich a man to defend the fort. He soon found means to dissatisfy the garrison."

In fact, the Indian troops in Agra were even more distracted and out of control than the defenders of Delhi on the eve of the battle of 11th September. Roused by the treachery and cowardice of their European officers, they put them in confinement but had no leader of their own able to lead them in a united and consistent resistance. Lake arriving on the scene on 4th October, at first tried to tempt the garrison to surrender on liberal terms. They long resisted, and Lake decided to apply force. Seven regular battalions of Sindhia, who occupied the town and the glacis of the fort, were attacked on 10th October by a large force of Indian infantry, and dislodged, after a long and bloody fight, in which the British lost 228 in killed and wounded and the campoo about six hundred.* Siege operations were now begun, and the British advanced batteries began to play upon the walls of Agra to effect a breach. Then the garrison cried for terms, and after some delay due to their internal discord, the fort was surrendered to the English on the 18th and all the immense wealth and armament within it fell into the victors' hands. An ordinary lieutenant's share of the prize-money here amounted to Rs. 2,000.

§ 8. *Sindhian army arrives near Agra.*

When by the 18th of October, Aligarh, Delhi and Agra had been won, General Lake was threatened by a new and pressing danger. Thirteen choice battalions of the original brigades trained by De Boigne had been sent by Daulat Rao Sindhia to Hindustan to maintain Maratha supremacy

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* On 13th October, some 2,500 sepoys, the remnant of the seven battalions defeated on the 10th, came over to the English. Thorn, 182; Fraser, i. 302; Pester, 207.

there. This detachment had started from the Deccan on 17th July, but meeting the full blast of the monsoon rains on the way, had marched so slowly as to reach the Agra district at the beginning of October, long after Aligarh and Delhi had been lost to Sindhia Immediately afterwards its supreme commander, Chevalier Dudrenec deserted to the English with two other European officers, Smith and Larpent (1st October), and the command of this corps was thrown on the unworthy shoulders of Ambāji Ingle, who had been deputed with it to take Perron's place as Sindhia's viceroy of the north Ambāji was no soldier and his one object in life was to create a State for himself in independence of Sindhia, as Sindhia had carved out a kingdom independently of his master the Peshwa But this fine army was saved from breaking up as a derelict ship by the soldiers agreeing to accept the leadership of Sarwar Khan, a brave fighter and born organizer who had forced Bourquien to give battle to the English at Patparganj, and after his defeat there had escaped with two unbroken battalions and joined Ambāji's corps in the Agra district Here he sought the help of some local Maratha chiefs and the Raja of Bharatpur, but they all declined to rise against the triumphant English Only Gulāb Rai Kadam and a few other petty Marātha captains, at the head of some 1,250 Deccani light horse, joined him, and he finally decided to set out for the Mewāt hills, where Vāman Rao (the nephew of Apā Khandé Rao) was holding his jagir of Kānud with a force of eight or nine thousand troopers Their union would have created a formidable force, which a bold and enterprising general could have used in making a promising attempt at the recovery of Delhi while the main British army under Lake himself was entangled in the siege of Agra But such a bold strategy was possible for Jaswant Rao Holkar alone, and not for Ambāji, who busied himself, instead in the more profitable task of looting the villages of the Bharatpur and Macheri States, and thus drove their Rajas more firmly into the arms of the English, and supplied the British general

with most useful local allies* in the very theatre of his operations against Ambāji.

Agra fell on 18th October, and set Lake's army free. On getting news of Ambāji's presence on the western border of Bharatpur, he decided to crush the Maratha chief before he could threaten Delhi or escape with all his arms and guns. General Lake set out from Agra on 27th October and after being delayed by a tremendous hurricane and deluge of rain on the way, made two forced marches of twenty miles a day on the 30th and 31st and reached Katumbar (27 miles north-west of Bharatpur) in the evening. Here he learnt that the enemy had left the place that very morning and retreated northwards. Thus getting accurate news of Ambāji's position and plan, Lake determined to make a supreme effort to intercept him before he could escape beyond his reach.

§ 9. *Lake's forced march to Laswari.*

Lake therefore left his camp, infantry and guns near Katumbar and started at 11 o'clock that very day at midnight with a purely cavalry force (three British and five Sepoy regiments), with no artillery except a pair of galloper-guns (6 pounders) attached to each of these regiments, and covering 25 miles in a little over six hours, sighted the enemy at Laswari, next day at dawn.

The village of Laswari (correctly called *Naswari*)† crowns the steep northern bank of a rivulet named *Baraki nāla*, 20 miles due east of Alwar city. Two thousand yards northwest of it and half a mile away from the rivulet stands

* Bakhtawar S., the Raja of Macheri, entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the British Government. His [illegible] Ahmad Bakhsh Kh. joined Lake, to whom he rendered valuable service in procuring supplies for the army, in sending a small force from Alwar to co-operate with it, and especially in supplying information about the movements of the Marathas *which led to the victory of Laswari*. The British made him Nawab of Luharu (in Hariana) and [illegible] of Alwar. *Rajputana Gazetteer*, 1880, vol. iii. 184.

The Raja of Bharatpur made a treaty of mutual defence and alliance with the English on 29th September, 1803.

† It is 8 m. south-east of Ramgarh, a revenue collector's [illegible] in the Alwar State.

the walled village of Mālpur. A mile south-west of Mālpur and two miles due west of Laswari, is the village of Barwara, on the same bank, the three villages forming a triangle whose apex is at Mālpur. Lake really fought two battles on that November day: the first, on the plain east of the line joining Laswari to Mālpur, *i.e.*, the side remote from the river, and the second west of that line, *i.e.*, between the river and Mālpur and around that village. This first battle, fought in the morning, was a purely cavalry attack on a line of artillery and ended in a British withdrawal with heavy loss. Then followed a four hours' lull in the combat. The fighting was renewed at 2 P.M., by an infantry advance westwards, hugging the northern bank of the rivulet and arriving due south of Mālpur village. The spear-head of this attack was a single cavalry regiment, the 29th Light Dragoons. In three hours the victory achieved with the bayonet was completed by the entire British cavalry annihilating the retreating enemy, among whom only two thousand men saved themselves by throwing down their arms. Ambāji's sole cavalry force of some 1,250 Deccani light horse fled away without once plying their sabres.

§ 10. *The rival armies at Laswari.*

Sindhia's army was made up of 13 good battalions of European-trained infantry, now commanded by Sarwar Khan, some twelve hundred Deccani horse under Gulāb Rāi Kadam and 72 guns. Their supreme commander was Ambāji Inglé.

There was not a single man of the Maratha race in the Sindhian infantry and artillery that fought General Lake at Laswari. It was entirely a battle between Hindustanis on both sides. Sindhia's battalions were formed exclusively by natives of Oudh and the Doab,—a very large proportion of them being Rajputs and Brahmans, the *Pandeys* of the Sepoy Mutiny, with some Pathans of Rohilkhand and the Doab. His artillery was manned by the same races, but the Muslims formed at least half of this arm, with a fair number

of black Christians and some "poor white" gun-layers. The only soldiers of the Maratha *race* present at Laswari were some 1,200 to 1,300 Deccani cavalry under Gulab Rao Kadam, but they made only a theatrical show by shouting and brandishing their swords from a safe distance and fled away before the British advance without striking one blow in support of their infantry brethren. Three French officers (mere gun-layers) were captured by the 29th Light Dragoons after this battle, and Skinner speaks of some Eurasian lads as serving in the same artillery. These Maratha warriors could save themselves only because they were mounted and left the field very early, abandoning their masters' battalions to be butchered by the English.

Thus there were members of the same clan and district, and even of the same family on the two sides that fought at Laswari, as well as Patparganj. Military service being the hereditary profession of these *Purbias* (Oudh men), when some brothers or cousins enlisted in the British army others who were rejected joined De Boigne's corps. Dismissed sepoys and deserters from the E. I. Co's army were always welcome to De Boigne's campoo commanders as "ready-made soldiers". Grant Duff knew it. He writes thus of the Sindhian infantry at Laswari, "Few, if any of these men were natives of Maharashtra; they were chiefly from Oudh, Rohilkhand and the Doab, for except Shivaji's Mawalis, and men trained in the ranks of the [Company's] Bombay sepoys, the native Marathas have never made good infantry." [iii. 256.]*

§ 11. *Laswari, first battle, British cavalry attack, 1 November*

The Sindhian army that General Lake was trying to catch had only 14 hours' start of him. Leaving Kathumbar in the morning of the 31st of October, they had reached

* Williams, in his *Historical Account of the Bengal Native Infantry* (1817), p. 292, confirms this racial composition of Sindhia's disciplined infantry.

Laswari in the evening. Next morning they were breaking camp and marching northwards into Mewat when they learnt that the British cavalry was close on their heels. As usual in Maratha campaigns, their cavalry and transport carts had already set out on the march a few hours earlier, nine battalions had begun marching after them, and only four battalions of infantry were left on the site to bring up the rear. It was this tail of the Maratha army that Lake discovered through the dust and turmoil two miles ahead of him, when he stood on the bank of the rivulet at Laswari.

At the first sight of the British host, Sarwar Khan with remarkable tactical skill and rapidity of movement made the best possible disposition of the four battalions he had then at hand. Facing round from the west to the east, he set up a defensive line in front of the village of Mālpur and extended it south-eastwards from Mālpur to Laswari,* so that his right now became his left, and the riverside route westwards from Laswari, which could have turned his own centre and base in the village of Mālpur, was denied to his enemy.

To reach Laswari the rivulet has to be forded a mile east of it, at Hasaoli, on the opposite bank. Here the Marāthas had cut the dam of a large tank and flooded the road to impede the march of the British cavalry. Even after Lake had crossed over to the northern bank, the exact dispositions of the enemy were at first concealed from his eyes by the cloud of dust raised by the movements of the Maratha horde and the thick jungle-grass, twelve to fifteen feet high, along their entire front.

Lake's advance force of cavalry in three brigades (8 regiments,—three of them British Dragoons and five Bengal Native Cavalry) had to ford the Baraki *nālā* slowly in a

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* Lake in his despatch to the Governor-General invariably uses the name *Laswari* wrongly for *Mālpur*. The Maratha front was about 3,000 yards, namely 2,000 from Laswari to the angle s.e. of Mālpur and some 1,000 yards along the eastern side of Mālpur. Two thousand infantry (four battalions) were deployed to hold this length of ground, which was therefore thinly manned.

series of thin columns. Arrived on the north bank, the commander-in-chief lost no time in pursuing his plan of keeping the enemy engaged by a light cavalry attack so as to give them no time to make an orderly retreat while his own infantry was still toiling far behind. The First Brigade (under Colonel T. P. Vandeleur) being first on the scene, was immediately launched against the enemy's guns at the extreme left of their line, in front of the village of Malpur. This task was most gallantly carried out by the 8th Light Dragoons and two sepoy regiments of cavalry charging stirrup to stirrup. In the face of a tremendous fire from Sindhia's numerous artillery and muskets, Lake's horsemen broke through the Maratha line, drove the gunners from their pieces, and penetrated to the village behind. But they were devastated by the Maratha fire, to which they could not reply. Their leader Col. T. P. Vandeleur was shot down when cheering his men to charge behind him, and many other officers and men fell,—83 officers and men besides 191 horses in these three regiments alone. So Lake called them back out of cannon-range.

The Third Cavalry Brigade (under Col. Macan) which was next in the marching column, was sent to turn the enemy's extreme right, in front of the village of Laswari. "Macan crossed the ravine with his two regiments (one British and one Bengal cavalry) under a heavy cannonade, wheeled into line in the face of a still heavier fire, and galloped down upon the guns as if he had been at a review. Nothing could be seen through the long grass, and the Maratha gunners, holding their fire until the horses were within 20 yards, poured upon them a storm of grape and chain shot. Yet still the squadrons galloped on, passed through the batteries although the cannon were fastened by chains from axle-tree to axle-tree, and rallied on the other side. But already the Maratha gunners, who had crept under their guns when the cavalry came upon them, were serving them again, while the infantry entrenched behind their waggons and carts, showered on the assembling

squadrons a hail of bullets Nothing daunted, Macan charged back through the line with the same irresistible gallantry and the same result; repeated the charge a third time,"—after which he was recalled by Lake's order, and withdrawn out of range [Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, v 60] The Second Brigade forming the rear of the column on the march, arrived too late to share in this part of the struggle

Lake had failed to break the enemy and had been forced to retire But the Marathas had no cause for triumph either Their boasted artillery had failed to stop the British cavalry, which had pierced their line and retired at pleasure The campoo infantry knew only how to fight on the defensive, and could not utilise the four hours' lull in the battle before the arrival of the British infantry and guns, by making a counter-charge and hurling Lake's cavalry back into destruction in the river Evidently they had lost the skill and their leaders the spirit taught by De Boigne a decade earlier

§ 12 *Laswari—midday lull in the battle*

The repulse of the British cavalry gave Sarwar Khan a respite for three hours (10 A M to 1 A M) which he put to the best use The report of the morning's fight had recalled his other nine battalions and cavalry force from the way to Mewat, and he set up a formidable row of double defences round Mālpur, where all the baggage stores and munitions of this army were deposited

Lake's infantry had started from their camp near Katumbar at 3 o'clock in the morning, and in eagerness to share the glory of their mounted brethren they had made a forced march of 25 miles in nine hours, arriving near Laswari at noon on the 1st of November Two hours' respite had to be given to them for rest and refreshment, before they could be hurled upon the enemy During this interval Ambāji sent a proposal for surrendering his guns if he was allowed to go away on certain conditions Lake

granted him an hour to carry out his promise. But Ambaji could not induce his men to part with their beloved guns without a struggle; the hour lapsed, and at 2 o'clock in the afternoon Lake launched his second attack, this time with his full force.

During the lull in the combat the British commander-in-chief and his staff had worked out their plan of operations in the second stage. The infantry was formed into a long narrow column, the 76th British Regiment leading and the sepoy battalions following. The 29th Light Dragoons accompanied the column and was followed by a battery of six guns. The attack was to proceed along the north bank of the Baraki *nālā* and turn the enemy's right.

§ 13. *Laswari—second battle, British action.*

The English attack advanced along the north bank of the *nalā*, being concealed from the enemy's eyes for a time by the sand-hills and tall jungle-grass. But the track was so narrow and rugged that the column was greatly lengthened and took a long time to debouch and expand into line at the end of the march. As soon as Sarwar Khan detected his enemy's line of approach, he with incredible rapidity and skill, threw his right wings back to face the south, and thus enveloped the village of Mālpur on three sides. The cavalry—about 1,250 Deccani irregulars under Gulāb Rai Kadam, was posted beyond the new right wing as a cover. The infantry lines now looked like two capital L's with their legs turned to the *left* and enclosing the village between them.

As soon as Lake's column came into range, it was subjected to a fierce bombardment from the guns along the Marātha front. Though Macan's battery opened fire in reply, yet the enemy's artillery was so greatly superior in number and weight of metal that the head of the British column began to suffer heavy losses, while compelled to stand still in that exposed position in order to allow the rest of the column time to come up and deploy into line.

At last the situation became so intolerable that Lake could not wait any longer but decided to send his cavalry on to break the enemy's double lines (at their right extreme) and follow up this charge by personally leading an attack with the only infantry that had come up to the front as yet, namely the 76th British and one battalion and a half of the Bengal infantry.* There was nearly a mile of plain to be crossed from Lake's present position on the river bank to his point of attack in the Maratha line (right extreme). The 76th British infantry on coming within range was subjected to a murderous fire of canister from the Sindhian artillery and checked. At the same time the Deccani cavalry from their right flank advanced threatening the 76th, but the charge was feeble, and the Maratha horsemen fled away before the British musketry fire, to form far away behind their second line.

The position of the small head of the British column was extremely critical, and Lake chose the heroic remedy of launching the 29th Light Dragoons to break the enemy's infantry lines. These horsemen quickly moved to the left of the 76th, formed into line and amidst deafening cheers from all their horse and foot charged into the valley of death. Nothing could resist them, the two parallel lines of the enemy's right wing, before and behind the village were pierced "with the impetuosity of lightning, in the face of a most tremendous fire of grape shot and a general volley of musketry."

By this time the two Native Infantry battalions had come up to the front, and Lake led them personally to reinforce the 76th Regiment, advance upon the enemy's right wing, and secure the guns which his cavalry had ridden through. The ground to be crossed was wide, "the Marathas standing valiantly to their guns, poured a concentrated artillery and infantry fire on the two battalions and faced their

* In the C-in-C's order of thanks the six companies of the 16th Native Infantry and the second battalion of the 12th were the corps of Native Infantry specially noticed for their timely and gallant advance to the support of H.M.'s 76th. (Williams, p. 291. Thorn, 228.)

charge bayonet to bayonet . . The British wing hurled themselves against the Marathas, burst through the gaps in their lines made by the charge of the Dragoons, and attacked the village of Mālpur with a fury that none could resist." Meanwhile the 29th L. Dragoons, after piercing through both lines of the enemy's right wing, had wheeled to the left and scattered like chaff Gulāb Rai Kadam's cavalry who were watching the scene from the west of Laswari. These Deccani soldiers abandoned their northern brethren and saved themselves by galloping away into the northern hills.

The hand to hand struggle between infantry on both sides, in and around the village of Mālpur raged with fury till 4 o'clock in the evening, by which time all the Maratha guns had been taken and their right wing and centre destroyed. Their left wing, still keeping the disciplined formation, tried to retreat in good order. But a new danger now beset them. The 29th Dragoons swung round from the pursuit of Gulāb Rai to the rear or north-western end of the village of Mālpur and closed that route of escape. The two other brigades of Lake's cavalry, kept in reserve during the afternoon's fighting, were now let loose upon the Sindhian infantry from the east and the north. Thus enveloped on all sides, the unbroken remnant of the campoo was huddled together beyond the north end of the village of Mālpur and forced to surrender.* General Lake mercifully released all the common sepoys (about 2,000) and detained only their officers, forty-eight in number, as prisoners.

When the fighting at last ended, the victors had no strength left for pursuit. The overworked men and horses of the British army tramped wearily to their camp in the

* "Soon after the firing had ceased, many men of the enemy's corps . . . sought refuge from the cavalry pursuit by gathering about the Native Battalions left on the field of battle to collect the wounded men and the captured ordnance, and throwing down their arms, they were screened with the mantle of generosity, . . . a great portion of the troops in the two armies having been natives of the same provinces." Williams, 292.

plain between the villages of Sahajpur and Singraka, a mile north-east of Laswari. But even here nature seemed bent on denying them peace and rest. The setting sun revealed an extensive plain covered with the bodies of the dead and the dying to the number of many thousands. On all sides arose the groans of the wounded, for whom the medical and transport arrangements were very scanty. "This terrible picture was heightened by successive explosions of powder magazines and tumbrils of ammunition (from the burning village of Mālpur), which shook the atmosphere, and obscured the horizon with tremendous clouds of sulphurous smoke. The murky night brought a hurricane which came on with furious rapidity, till it spread an indescribable degree of horror over the bloodstained field." [Thorn, 227.]

§ 11. *Reflections on the destruction of De Boigne's army*

The battle of Laswari ended in "the annihilation of the whole of the regular forces in Sindhia's service commanded by French officers," as Lake justly claimed after his victory. But a heavy price had to be paid for it. On the British side 822 men were "killed and wounded out of a total force on the ground of about 8,000 men." Three officers of the highest rank and ten lower ones were killed, while about 40 others were wounded. The eight cavalry regiments lost 553 horses. But this battle showed the wonderful power of endurance, daring and cohesion of the British army. Their infantry went into the action after marching 65 miles in 48 hours, the cavalry covered 42 miles in 24 hours, and flung themselves on the enemy's unsubdued artillery immediately on reaching the field. Their horses were not watered or fed for twenty hours during which they had been kept saddled and fighting. No wonder when the end of it came, the victors had no breath left for pursuit. [Pearse, 241. Kharé, xiv. p. 7938.]

The glory of the British arms was heightened by the staunchness and bravery of the enemy whom they subdued

De Boigne's old brigades were annihilated but not disgraced. Their conqueror himself paid them the highest compliment when he reported to the Governor-General, "All the sepoys of the enemy behaved exceedingly well, and if they had been commanded by French officers the event would have been extremely doubtful. I never was in so serious a business in my life, or anything like it. Their gunners stood to their guns until killed by the bayonet. These fellows fought like devils, or rather heroes." Captain Grant Duff confirms this praise, "The hardy veterans of De Boigne, determined to die where they could not conquer, fought on with brave though unavailing obstinacy, and except about 2000, who were broken, surrounded and made prisoners, they fell with their arms in their hands." [Pearse 249, Duff, iii. 256.]

At Laswari sepoys of the same race and province with equality of armament, fought on the opposite sides. It is the historian's duty to explain why "the bravery and obstinacy of Sindhia's trained brigades were unavailing" on that day. The first and foremost handicap of the campoo was their being suddenly deprived of the heads to whose guidance they had been accustomed ever since their formation fourteen years ago. Now, when the storm of war burst upon Sindhia, no Indian higher officers could take the places of the mercenary foreign captains who had deserted their men in the hour of need. The campoo could not improvise a general staff for co-ordinating the action of the different parts of the same army after being deserted by their European chiefs. Thus, at Patparganj and Laswari each battalion fought on the initiative of its own Indian commandant, with no generalissimo to link their actions together, in the way that Lake or Arthur Wellesley made his army one compact fighting machine. Our [illegible]

* Skinner, who was now on the British side near Delhi, [illegible] Lord Lake was returning from the battle, some of the [illegible] cheered him. He took off his hat and thanked them, but told [illegible] despise death as these brave fellows had done, pointing to the [illegible] who were lying thick around their guns." (Fraser, [illegible])

privates usually fought to the death, but the higher Indian officers were often a disgrace to their race

The rot was worst in the head of this campoo Ambāji Inglé, who had come to take Perron's place as the supreme General, was the worst sinner. At the first sign of the battle turning against him at Laswari, he took to flight on a richly caparisoned elephant, but as the pursuit grew hotter he changed to a swift horse and escaped, without making one attempt to retrieve the day or save the remnant of his men by conducting an orderly retreat *

Contrast the Marātha generalissimo's conduct with his British opponent's Lake personally headed every charge of his infantry On that eventful afternoon, while the British column was being deployed for the attack, General Lake, as ever riding in the front rank, had his horse shot under him (the second time in one day) and his coat burnt by an enemy bullet which missed his breast by the merest chance His son George dismounted, gave his own charger to his father, and mounted a riderless horse found there Just then a shot struck him and the gallant youth fell down senseless. The agonised father turned to look at his dying son, but it was for a moment only At the stern call of duty natural feelings were suppressed The General left his son's quivering body, and instantly jumping into the saddle, rode away to lead his infantry to the charge on the right of the 76th British Foot The scene inspired all who saw it with an indescribable ardour to be worthy of such a leader.

Three British officers, next in rank to Lake only, fell in this battle, besides ten others of less exalted rank but no colonel captain or even lieutenant in Sindhia's army, because these offices in the campoo had been hitherto filled

* Ambāji's cowardly duplicity did not end with the battle of Laswari On 16 Dec he made a treaty agreeing to give up the fort of Gwalior to the English But when a British detachment went to the place, its qiladar refused to yield it, and letters from Ambaji were intercepted in which he directed the garrison never to surrender to the English and promised them further supplies of men and money immediately Thorn, 246 Foster 237

by Europeans only. The hard-pressed British troops were kept in heart by the example of their European officers in the Royal and the Company's services alike, who fearlessly sacrificed themselves in front of their men. As Lake himself wrote after one of these battles "You may perceive by the loss of European officers in sepoy regiments how necessary it is for them to expose themselves—in short, everything has been done by the example and exertions of the officers . . . The sepoys have behaved exceedingly well but from my observation this day as well as on every other, it is impossible to do great things in a gallant and quick style without Europeans" (*i.e.*, European regiments) (Pearse, 214).

The infantry of Oudhmen in Sindhia's service were no doubt brave and disciplined, but there was no regular cavalry in their brigades. Sindhia's horsemen were indigenous troopers, mostly Marathas with a proportion of Pathan and other North Indian races; their equipment and tactics fitted them for light raiding only. Cavalry has always been the weakest arm of the Indian army ever since our encounter with Alexander's horsemen on the bank of the Jhelam more than two thousand years ago. The Indian troopers mounted on light horses, were never trained to deliver shock charges like a battering ram, but used to whirl round and try to throw into disorder a stationary enemy. They shrank from meeting breast to breast any heavy cavalry in compact serried ranks like the Turks or the British. In fact in the campoo the cavalry did not count; they waited for the success of the regular infantry before making any move of their own. Hence, they could never come to the aid of their hard-pressed brethren of the foot regiments.

In their tactics, the campoo had become obsessed with the belief that fire-power was everything in war, and that battles were won by mere superiority in the number of guns and the supply of munitions. This lesson had been

impressed on them by their European trainers again and again.* They had never been prepared for the manly test of the push of the pike or the crossing of bayonets, and therefore, when their guns failed to check the British advance, the infantrymen could make no stand before the line of glittering steel in the hands of British musketeers and even of British-led sepoys. The campoo's guns fell undefended into the hands of the charging British lines, who cut down such gunners as stood by their pieces, while their own infantry guards made no stand before the on-rushing foe.

The perfect co-ordination of action between cavalry and infantry and the advance of artillery in close support of a moving infantry, were never learnt by Sindhia's campoo, or if once learnt they had been forgotten after the departure of De Boigne. Perron had no galloper guns attached to his Regular Cavalry, but only to the Hindustan horse,—none of the latter were present at Laswari. [*PRC.* ix. p. 112.] Thus Sarwar Khan had nothing but his guns of position to oppose Lake's moving batteries (four in number) in the decisive fighting of the afternoon, and his infantry became helpless targets on leaving their trenches.

Even as regards musketry, it is evident that the campoo sepoys were behind the British sepoys in the accuracy and rapidity of their fire. Their French and mestizo officers, bent solely on making their private fortunes, not only stole the money in the regimental chests—as Lestenneau and Bourquien had done,—but peculated the funds allotted for buying powder and shot for their men's target practice. Hence most of Sindhia's soldiers were poor marksmen, who shot wildly and could not stop the British advance with bullets.

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* Pester testifies to it at five places in his diary of this war. "All the officers lately in Sindhia's employ [and now come over to the English] assure us that they depend entirely on the formidable train of artillery to defeat us." [*War and Sport*, 159, 171, 187, 217 &c.] See Col. Dawes's assurance to the Peshwa before the battle of Hadapsar (Ch. 45 § 6.) Wellington's view, Gur. ii.

Appendix E

The strength of the two armies at Laswari

J. G. Duff (iii. 253) gives to Sindhia's army *twelve* battalions of which only 7 came from the Deccan and the rest were the remnants of Perron's northern armies,—1200 to 1500 good horse, and 75 guns. Lake's Quarter-Master John Pester repeatedly notes in his Diary (18th, 24th and 27th Oct.) that he learnt from spies returned from the enemy camp that their strength was *thirteen* battalions. Skinner (i. 304) gives Sarwar Kh. *fourteen* battalions. A Marathi letter (Kharé, xiv. p. 7938) says, "Gulāb Rai Kadam and others with 2000 Deccani troopers and *fifteen* battalions confronted the Red faces",—(both figures as usual inflated.) Lake's despatches put the enemy's strength at *seventeen* battalions.

Sarwar Kh. is mentioned by Skinner as the chief commander (i. 304). The supreme head of Sindhia's forces in this battle is named *Abaji* in the English despatches, clearly a Persian scribe's miswriting of *Ambaji* by dropping the dot (*nuqta*) for *n*. This name puzzled Grant Duff, who writes (iii. 253*n*), "I have not ascertained who this officer was. It was perhaps one of Ambāji Inglé's *carcoons*." The Marathi records clearly state that Ambāji fought the English at Laswari (Kharé, xiv. pp. 7938 and 7919). No clerk (*karkun*), whose name is utterly unknown in Maratha history could have been commander-in-chief of Sindhia's choice brigades at Laswari.

Lake's own force is put by his biographer Col. Pearse, who has consulted all regimental records, as "a total of about 8000 men on the ground" (p. 241). In this campaign, General Lake was accompanied by a force of Jat, Alwar and Barech Pathan auxiliaries, about whom the English despatches are totally silent, but whose exact work we can learn from the Marathi letters, two contemporary Persian narratives by Hindu clerks preserved in the British Museum (Or. Ms. 190 and 1699), and Powlett's *Alwar Gazetteer*

(pub in 1880) Their total strength was about 2300 These indigenous troops, no doubt, took no part in the assaults by which the British Indian troops gained the victory, but they were not altogether useless First, they brought intelligence of the enemy movements Then, their very presence neutralised the weaker Deccani horse on Sindhia's side (say, 2300 against 1250) And finally, these allies, by plundering and burning the baggage and camp of the Southern army in the village of Mālpur, effected the utter break down of the enemy's resistance and the cohesion of their retreating battalions, at a time when Lake's own soldiers were too weary to take one step more

That the Jat and Alwar troops gave Ambāji's force the *coup de grace* is admitted in the Marāthi letters,—"Finally the General Sāhib charged in person Then Kadam and other Deccani horsemen fled away Thereafter the Mācheri-wāla Rao Raja and Bharatpur and other zamindars (*i e*, their contingents) attacked the rear of the paltan As the camp was plundered, thousands of our paltan were slain" (Khaié, xiv No 6788)

Pandit Bhagwāndās Shiupuri writes in his Persian narrative: "During the fighting when nobody was able to make an advance, a *fauj* of the Rao Raja fell, all unawares, on the camp of the enemy in the rear. and did not spare themselves in plundering The enemy, who had been so long firmly standing and bravely fighting, lost heart on being this attacked from two sides, and most of them were slain" (Or Ms 1699, p 10) The ms of Dhonkal Singh Munshi (of the Bharatpur service) states, that Lake had given these ragged auxiliaries the choice between scouting in advance of his army or guarding his camp from the enemy's predatory horse, and that they chose the latter He also testifies to the Rao Raja's men plundering the campoo broken by the British attack (Or Ms 190 ff 24-25) The reward given to the Macheri Raja's vakil after Laswari is an index to the value set upon his aid in this campaign by the British authorities (*Alwar Gaz*, iii 184)

CHAPTER L

THE DEFEAT OF SINDHIA IN THE SOUTH

§ 1 *Generals Lake and Wellesley in contrasted positions*

In the north General Lake had destroyed Sindhia's disciplined armies and taken all his great forts by the 1st of November. In the south Arthur Wellesley had, no doubt, struck the first blow three weeks earlier than Lake, but he was two months behind his northern rival in bringing Sindhia and Bhonsle down on their knees. This difference is explained by the difference in terrain and population between the two theatres of war. Lake in 1803 fought in a level country with a compact area accustomed to one administration; but Arthur Wellesley's campaigns ranged over a very much wider and more dispersed region, in a broken country divided into many separate dominions. The sudden fall of Perron brought a crowd of Hindustani chiefs competing for Lake's favour to rise against the oppression and avarice of their late rulers, the Marathas and their French agents.* Thus, Lake could always count on a plentiful supply of provisions by local traders and friendly chiefs all along his route. Wellesley had to live in a war-wasted, famine-stricken country, where his provisions had usually to be carried by himself on the march from his depots. Lake operated in a region where every Maratha was an alien; Arthur Wellesley fought in the Marātha homeland, among a population naturally hostile to the English intruders, his only helpers being a number of petty Muslim jāgirdārs.†

Popular ill feeling against the French officers in the Doab, noticed by Heber ii 343. MM iii 641, 612.

† Subhān Khan of Partur, Salābat Kh. the jāgirdār of Ellichpur [Gurwood, iii 274, 264, 178 &c.] Mir Kh. Pathan was also seduced (*Ibid.* 228.) In the village of Dewalghāt, below Buldānā, a Muslim landholder showed me letters signed by Arthur Wellesley thanking his ancestor for help rendered in this campaign.

Lake could get prompt and correct intelligence of his enemy's doings from his local allies, such as the Bharatpur and Alwar Rajas, while Arthur Wellesley had the greatest difficulty in scouting for news in a Marātha country As he wrote, "The enemy horse were so numerous that without an army (for escort) their position could not be reconnoitred by an European officer , and even the (experienced) *harkārās* in our own service cannot be employed here, as being natives of the Karnātak they are as well-known as Europeans" [*S D.* iv 210]

§ 2 *Arthur Wellesley's forces and plan of war*

The force appointed to oppose Sindhia in the Deccan consisted of two divisions, the first, directly under the supreme commander, Major General Arthur Wellesley, was 11,153 strong, out of whom 2,164 were British and 8,989 were sepoys, the Indian element being a little over four to one The other division was made up of the Haidarabad Subsidiary Force, under Colonel James Stevenson, subordinate to Wellesley, and contained 9,459 men out of whom the Europeans were only one-tenth (or 890 against 8 569 sepoys) This latter force had no European cavalry with it, and its strength in regular horse was only 1,022, against Wellesley's 2,172 sabres * A body of the Nizām's irregular cavalry and rabble infantry under Sakho Rudhr followed Wellesley, but more as a distraction than a help, because of their frequent desertion during the campaign The General complained, "The Nizām's horse are very useless," and again, "The Nizām's troops behave so ill," &c He was troubled also by treachery (*fitur*) among their officers [Gurwood, ed of 1837, ii 302, 303 Kharé, xiv 6693 *Sup D* iv 173]

Arthur Wellesley had thought out a clear plan for fighting the Marathas in anticipation of the war He had solved

* The above figures are taken from Fortescue's *Hist of Br Army*, v 15 To arrive at his total this author adds one-eight to the bayonet and sabre strength for "officers, sergeants &c "

the problem of ensuring the regular supply of food and munitions on which the speed and effectiveness of his troops depended by trial and error during his long chase of Dhundhā Wāgh in 1800 The essence of his strategy was never to let the Maratha raiders remain undisturbed at any place long enough to plunder it and feed themselves.[*] This implied that his own troops should be always ready to set out at a moment's notice and drive the enemy about without being compelled to halt anywhere by the lack of provisions His primary object was to keep his marching troops self-sufficient in respect of their food and stores, while the enemy's predatory horse was weakened by the necessity of living on the country and thus antagonising the local people

To secure this self-sufficiency, General Wellesley required a fortified depot for his food, munitions, and replacements of transport,—and even cattle fodder,—not far from his marching army, so as to avoid dependence on the base at Haidarabad, 500 miles away, or the one at Bombay, the path from which was most difficult and insecure The providing of escorts for such long lines of transport would have greatly reduced his fighting strength and the speed of his movements He solved this problem by capturing Ahmadnagar With such an impregnable base close behind and his famous Mysore bullocks well fed, he could march 23 miles a day in excellent fighting condition, and thus counter the noted mobility of the Maratha horse His practically-designed basket-boats (coracles) and pontoons of copper sheet barrels carried on bullock-carts, enabled him to ferry his army over the rivers and overtake the enemy at will

On 8th August, General Wellesley started from his camp at Walki eight miles south of Ahmadnagar Next day after a three hours' assault he captured the walled city lying outside the fort of Ahmadnagar Three days later he completed his task when he gained possession of that famous

[*] Gurwood, ii 203, 239, 251 Fortescue, *Hist of Br Army*, v 8, 10 *Sup Desp* iv 97-98, 73, 109

fortress itself by opening a severe bombardment and at the same time seducing the garrison by granting them very liberal terms for surrender In this safe and central base, he planted his main depot and hospital Then he faced his problem of guarding both the Punā district on his west and the Nizām's territory on his east and north from the enemy's raids

§ 3 *Daulat Rao Sindhia's plans and first movements, August 1803*

Daulat Rao had declared war against the English on 1st August, and yet for more than three weeks he made no use of his undoubtedly superior strength In fact, his counsellors only talked and waited Their plan was to persuade Jaswant Rao Holkar to join them, after which the three sardārs would march together to Punā with the consent of the Peshwā, and induce him to discharge his English protectors and call a conference of all his feudatories which would restore the Marātha empire to its normal condition as before the death of Tukoji Holkar. This nice scheme depended for its success on two conditions first, that Jaswant Holkar would heartily join Daulat Rao without being guaranteed the old absolute parity of their two houses, and secondly, that the Peshwā would prefer Jaswant or Daulat Rao to the English as his protectors The utter hollowness of these hopes was proved by the panic which seized Punā at the mere report that their three highest *sardārs* intended to visit their master's capital as loyal servants the citizens began to arrange for flight to the villages, the English erected sand-bag batteries for defending the approaches to Punā,

Fortescue, v 12, 16-18 *Sup Des* ix 100 (Ahm had, in June, 1000 sepoys, 1000 Arabs, and 3 French mestizo officers,—outside the fort) "In Ahm fort there was an Englishman in Sindhia's paltan, he turned traitor and delivered the fort to Wellesley The qiladar Malhār Kulkarni of Chambhargonda, made terms to save his own property " "The two battalions in the garrison turned disloyal The English seduced the artillerymen, hence there was treachery " Khare, xiv, 6683, 6685 Curious story of the capture of the *peth* by firing smoke-filled shells *Ibid* 6682

and the Peshwā contemplated a return "to his former place of asylum", *i.e.*, Bassein! [Khare, xiv. 6692.]

Daulat Rao and Raghuji Bhonslé waited and waited for the coming of Jaswant Rao Holkar, which was promised on 30th August, but he never came, and merely sent a force of his predatory horse to join Sindhia, while he himself retired to the north of the Tapti after getting possession of his nephew, the child Khande Rao II. Thus, the time for striking the first blow was lost.

Sindhiā was roused out of his stupor by the news that General Wellesley had seized his great arsenal and treasure-house at Ahmadnagar and also hanged the revenue-collector of his ancestral village Jāmgāon. So, he sent a force of 10,000 horse under Gopāl Bhāu, with a large Pindhāri horde, to cross the Nizām's frontier and plunder his district of Aurangabad (c. 18 Aug.). The approach of this force to the Godāvari was a direct threat to Punā. [Khare, xiv. 6665.]

Sindhia did not fully show his hand till near the end of this month, when he reached Jālnā with his cavalry only, after leaving his trained battalions beyond the Ajantā pass to follow later. An envoy from Sindhia and Bhonslé reached Punā on 31st August, and delivered to the Peshwā their request that he should dismiss his English protectors, summon all his feudatory nobles to his capital and let this Council of Notables decide how to restore the independent government of the Marātha empire as it was in the good old days. The coming of the envoy threw the Peshwā's court and the Punā public into consternation. It was only natural to expect that the coming of all the three sardārs with their armies would repeat in a threefold form the horrors of Jaswant Holkar's invasion of last year, the memory of which was not yet ten months old.

Wellesley was waiting to receive into Ahmadnagar two very large convoys of money, grain, stores and munitions which were coming to him from Haidarabad and Mysore for filling his magazines adequately for a long campaign. He had therefore to keep one eye on his left to guard the

road to Punā, and another eye on his right to watch the road from Haidarabad to the Godāvari, lest the enemy's myriads of light horse should slip across that river and cut off these convoys This double-headed threat was countered by Wellesley taking post at Tokā and throwing a pontoon bridge over the Godāvari there, so as to be able to march to the defence of either of the two regions as soon as it was threatened by the enemy He advanced from his new base at Ahmadnagar to the Godāvari at Kāvegāon-Tokā, 32 miles upstream of Paithān, on 21st August Stevenson had been already detached to guard the Nizām's district of Auranga bad, east of the Godāvari

§ 4 *The war in the Godāvari valley, September 1-10*

On 1st September Sindhiā and Bhonslé themselves came from Jālnā southwards to Paithān on the Godāvari, with their cavalry only This revived the threat to Punā But Arthur Wellesley had crossed that river on the 24th and reached Aurangabad on the 29th of the preceding month Thus the two divisions of the British army were now operating in the same district, but apart For the British operations during the first ten days of September, it will be enough to say that their alert and quick marches kept the enemy ever on the run, without the Maratha light horse being able to do any harm to the Nizām's districts The two Rajas' cavalry were so much distressed by scarcity and shaken by fear of British surprises that "they swore that they would not serve unless supported by the infantry and the guns" [Gurwood, ii 287]

Stevenson's campaign need not be described in detail Though General Wellesley censured him and the historian Sir John Fortescue concurs in the censure Colonel Stevenson had done work not without value inspite of his weaker force and poorer grain supply compared with his superior's Up to 24th August he had kept the enemy out of the Nizām's territory, and when they did come after that date, he had kept

them on the run, in accordance with Wellesley's strategy On 2nd September he stormed Sindhia's fort of Jālnā after a severe fight Thereafter he made rapid marches and beat up the camps of Sindhia's Pindhāri horse by night attacks on the 6th, 7th, and 9th, though an earlier attempt at surprise at the end of August had failed because his guides missed the way and he arrived at his objective after sunrise when Gopāl Bhāu was on the alert and gave him a bloody repulse [Kharé, xiv 6678, 6692, 6693 Gurwood, ii 286-288.]

But the scarcity of grain caused indescribable suffering in Stevenson's corps.* The non control of Arthur Wellesley reserved his provision supply for fully rationing his fighting forces and transport service, but the camp-followers were left to fend for themselves The auxiliary force too was told to live as best they could in that famine-stricken district

Arthur Wellesley's policy of keeping the enemy on the run, instead of rushing headlong into a regular battle, made his constant marching and countermarching seem erratic and hesitating to the Marāthas In the pride of ignorance, they reported "General Wellesley's spirit has been damped on seeing the vastness of the Maratha forces and he is deliberating what to do" It would have taken something more than mere numbers to freeze the heart of "the great world conqueror's conqueror" of the days to come, and Daulat Rao knew it Hence a later report from Punā tells us, "The two *sardārs* (Daulat Rao and Raghuji) were near Parthān (on 1st September), when news came that the Sea-dwellers would make a surprise attack on them, so both Chiefs went away towards Bir (3rd September)"† They were at Partur

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* Stevenson was an old officer of the E. I. Co. whose health had broken down during long years of service in India Sindhia recovered Jālnā from the English about 10th September after Stevenson had marched away from that battered fort, leaving a weak [illegible] in it Kharé, xiv 6702 6711, 6717 "I think it capital that [illegible] played their own game upon the Marathas and [illegible] the first to cut off supplies going to their camp" A W to Stevenson, 26 Aug (Gur ii 243)

† Kharé, xiv 6695 and 6708 *Partur* is on the Dudnā [illegible] of the Godāvari, 30 miles [illegible] of Jālnā

on the 3rd and 4th Stevenson's night attacks on their Pindhāris frightened them still more But soon afterwards their regular infantry and guns began to come up the Ajanta pass and join them, and after some more puzzled and futile movements the two Rajas set their faces back to the Ajanta pass, and even thought of returning to Burhānpur We find them near Badnāpur, north-west of Jālnā, on the 12th

§ 5 *The lull in the war, 11-21 September*

Thus after the daily movements and rapid changes of direction during the last fortnight, came ten quiet days (11-20 September), as the rival hosts receded northwards from the bank of the Godāvari * During this period all the thirteen battalions and artillery of the two Confederates joined them and the entire Marātha army was assembled in a long line of camps from Bhokardan to Jafarabad On the English side, too, the last of the anxiously waited for convoys from Mysore, under Major Hill, reached Wellesley on the 18th The British commander-in-chief, having no longer to watch the Haidarabad road, now felt himself free to strike the decisive blow

On the 19th, Wellesley wrote to Stevenson to move eastwards, while he himself would march northwards, so that the two divisions might meet together on the 21st and form a joint plan of action They approached each other between Jālnā and Badnāpur, on the 21st, when Wellesley rode out to Stevenson's corps and it was settled that the latter should march northwards skirting the western side of the hills separating Badnāpur-Jālnā from Ajantā, while Wellesley would advance along the eastern edge of these hills towards the Badāoli and Lakanwārā passes, and that on the 24th after

* General Wellesley rightly boasted, in a letter of 10th Sept, "I have given the enemy a turn By a few rapid marches to the southward I have shown them that they could not go alone to Haidarabad, and I have consequently forced them to return to the northward" And again, six days later, "The enemy are quiet to the northward We are all in tranquillity in this quarter But I propose to disturb the general tranquillity in a day or two, as soon as I shall be joined by Hill" (Gurwood, ii 287, 309)

reaching the open ground at the end, the two generals should turn towards each other and crush the enemy between them. Sindhia was reported to be posted in Bhokardan town and west of it.

Leaving Jālnā on the 21st, Wellesley's army slowly defiled through the narrow passes and broken country and reached Pangri 10 air-miles northwards on the 22nd. Next morning the march was resumed, and Nālni, 12 miles onwards, was reached at 11 o'clock. Here he learnt that the enemy were not fourteen miles away to the *west* of Bhokardan and therefore close to Stevenson, as reported by spies before, but only six miles from Nālni, at Assaye, a good deal *east* of Bhokardan.

In addition to gaining this correct knowledge of the enemy's position, Arthur Wellesley here received news as cheering as that which had greeted Lake on the eve of the battle of Delhi. Collins had bribed a clerk of Daulat Rao Sindhia when living in his camp as Resident, and this traitor had contacted Wellesley at that General's request. The British Commander heard at Nālni that the Confederated armies were bent on retreat to Ajanta and that there was daily mutiny among their unpaid starving soldiers who were threatening Sindhia's *diwān* with violence (*dharnā*).*

§ 6. *General Wellesley advances to Assaye, 23rd September*

Hearing that the Maratha cavalry had already moved off the ground and their infantry was about to follow, the British General at once changed his original plan in order to take full advantage of the new situation. He knew that Sindhia's cavalry force was weak in number and poor in quality, but his strength lay in his trained infantry and guns.† [Gurwood, ii. 285.]

* A. W. to Resident Collins, "You mentioned that you had had a secret communication with one of Sindhia's *munshis*. It would be very desirable to renew this communication during the war." *Sup. Des.* iv. 175. *Dharnā* in Kharé, 6734. Threat to diwān, Gulgulé D., 15 Oct.

† The Marāthi despatches speak of the battle of Assaye as a *chhāpā* or surprise, and admit that when the English attack opened, Sindhia was off his guard (*be-fām*) and his troops quite unprepared and

Therefore, if these regular battalions could be crushed, the defeat of Bhonslé would be an easy task, as the victorious English would then be free to invade Bhonslé's Berar territory and force the Raja to hasten back for its defence The problem for Wellesley was how to overtake Sindhia's disciplined infantry before it could run away with its powerful artillery If he had put the battle off to the 24th as originally planned for the joint attack, then the enemy were sure to have given him the slip in the day's respite thus gained, or at least concentrated all their forces for presenting a united front The success of Wellesley's plan depended entirely on its being a surprise for the Marathas As he writes, "In all military operations, but particularly in India, *time is everything*" [MM v Mar War, 328]

There was besides, a secret reason for General Wellesley's confidence in at once hastening with his own small force to give battle to the myriads of the full Maratha army The far-sighted diplomacy of the Governor General had contrived that Begam Samru's five battalions, now with Sindhia in the Deccan, would come over to the English as soon as they could separate themselves from him with safety The shock and confusion of a British attack on one part of the Maratha camp would give the Sardhana contingent this opportunity and cripple Sindhia's strength for the future, even if the Maratha army was not fully defeated Pohlmann, who led one full brigade at Assaye, had also made up his mind to desert Sindhia and share the Governor-General's very liberal promise of bounty * Thus it

without any plan Kharé, xiv 6749, 6734 Gulgule D letter of 15 Oct

* On 18th July Marquess Wellesley sent orders to Col Scott in the Deccan, to see that "means might be contrived to enable four of Begam Samru's battalions then with Sindhia in the Deccan, to join General Wellesley" (MM iii 192) "Colonel Pohlmann received intelligence from General Perron on the 12th Sept that the English officers [of Sindhia] had gone to the British settlements" (Arthur W *Sup D* iv 207) The Marāthi despatches report,—"Samru's [four] battalions could not get ready [to join in the battle] Our Brigade (*i e*, Mahādji's First Campoo) four battalions of Michel Felose, and one battalion of Samru were on advanced guard duty, and *these alone* met the English The *five battalions* slew many men on the British side Three battalions of M Felose abandoned their guns, and one bat

cappened that Wellington "with his fiery few did *not* clash against the myriads at Assaye," but only against a small section of the bloated Maratha army, in the actual clash of arms only five battalions of Sindhia stood up against the English

§ 7 The Maratha armies at Assaye

Leaving his infantry and baggage behind General Wellesley rode out from Nālni with his cavalry only to reconnoitre Reaching the crest of a hillock about four miles ahead at noon he beheld the armies of the two Rajas spread out before him beyond the Khelnā river, flowing a mile north of him They filled the entire parallelogram eight miles in length west to east, between Bhokardan and Assaye, and two miles north to south between the Juah *nalā* and the Khelnā river Sindhia with his cavalry lay at their extreme right, close to the town of Bhokardan, Bhonsle with his horse and foot in the centre and last of all, the telescope revealed Sindhia's regular infantry and their artillery at the extreme left of their line, which ended before the village of Assaye on the south side of the Juah A mile and a half downstream from this village the two rivulets met together in a triangle

At the first view the camping ground of the Marathas seemed to be covered by a moving mass of men and horses in disorder That morning the soldiers had staged a *dharnā* or coercive demonstration against their employers for their due pay and rations, and Daulat Rao had ridden from his tent over to Raghuji Bhonsle's camp some four miles east of himself, for consultation, that is to talk and talk helplessly No battle was expected nor had they any news of the close approach of the English army Here in their camp, everyone was unready and off his guard, the gun bullocks had been sent out in the morning to graze, the soldiers were dispersed each caste cooking its own food in

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was totally destroyed or wounded" *Gul D* and Khare ... W ... Gur ii 434 and 456

a separate place Only a small force of advanced guards (or picquets as they would be called in the English army) was on duty at Assaye, with the campoo guns Thus it happened, that when the battle opened, the supreme head of Sindhia's army was six miles in the rear of the point of attack, with a moving mass of men and materials between them [Kharé, xiv 6734, 6749 Gulgulé D 15 Oct]

§ 8 *Assaye,—Wellesley's plan of battle, why it was upset*

Wellesley's rule of war was never to attack the Marāthas when holding a well-chosen and strongly defended position, but to force them on to move and strike them when thrown into disorder by marching There was a ford over the Khelnā at Lingwāri a mile west of Wellesley's first point of observation, and hordes of Maratha irregular cavalry were seen to stand on both sides of it, but they took no part in the battle Nearly three miles further down the river there was an unguarded ford at Pipalgāon-Warud The British General planned to keep to the south bank of the Khelnā for two miles, then cross the river at this second ford and roll up the enemy's left wing south of Assaye

The British army advanced eastwards, their own cavalry riding on their left to screen their infantry in the centre from the enemy's observation on the opposite bank They crossed the Khelnā at the ford chosen and marched into the delta to form their battle order, in a north to south line from Assaye to the Khelnā bank The fork of the two rivulets which united a mile below the ford, served as a natural cover for both the flanks and rear of the British battle line against any attack by the myriads of Maratha light horse

The Marathas, at the first sight of Wellesley's force at noon, broke up camp and drew their infantry in a long line facing the Khelnā, and parallel to the two rivers But as soon as they saw him crossing the Pipalgāon ford, they rapidly wheeled a quarter circle to their left and drew up

with their first line north to south at right angles to the two rivers, barring Wellesley's path of attack on their left flank. Their second line was formed west to east along the south bank of the Juah *nālā*, meeting their first line at the village of Assaye, both lines pivoting upon that village. Assaye was also the hinge of the British line. The field over which the battle was fought was a quarter-circle or half-opened fan. Wellesley's plan was to work with his own left along the circumference of this quarter-circle from the south to the west, strike the enemy's right on the *Juah nala*, and roll their entire line eastwards back upon Assaye, whose trenches and powerful guns would then be abandoned by an enemy defeated all along their front. Therefore, his left wing would have to cover four times as much ground as his right and also to keep out of the range of the enemy's heavy guns in Assaye during the first stage of this tactical operation.

But in the actual execution the General's plan was mangled, a needless slaughter of the British right wing followed, and a disaster to the British arms which would have led to the suicide* of Wellington was averted only by the heroism and endurance of the British Dragoons and the shameful cowardice of the Marātha cavalry. When brought face to face with the enemy's lines, Wellesley had to change his battle plan immediately. As the enemy's infantry and line of guns greatly outflanked his first line on both hands, he ordered it to be lengthened by bringing the second line within the first, and forming one long line with the two Highland Regiments (the 78th Ross-shire Buffs and the 74th Campbells) at the two extremes and the five Madras Sepoy battalions in the centre. At the same time, his cavalry instead of being kept back as a reserve or third line was pushed on to the rear of his extreme right, in order to guard that flank up to the Juah *nālā*. His first misfortune

* Arthur Wellesley said to Elphinstone after the [illegible] would have happened if we had been beat and [illegible] I [illegible] have made a gallows [illegible] tent-pole and [illegible]

was that the fighting started before this second formation could be completed Next, all his guns had to be left behind by reason of their bullocks and drivers being killed by the superior Maratha artillery, so that the British fought all the later stages of this battle without any artillery assistance of their own And worst of all the General's plan was wrecked by the folly of Colonel Orrock, who commanded the picquets in the extreme right and whose troops were to act as the battalion of direction in the advance upon the enemy's line

§ 9 *Battle of Assaye—first stage, disaster to the British right wing*

Orrock had been ordered not to approach Assaye at his extreme right, but carefully keep outside the range of the big guns at that fortified village But "from habits of dissipation and idleness he had become incapable of giving attention to an order to find out its meaning", as Wellesley complained to Elphinstone He marched his corps nearer and nearer to Assaye and on being assailed by its guns, continued to press on in the same direction without trying to incline to the planned route of advance Thus a wide gap was formed between him and the sepoy battalions on his left His wrong movement also masked the fire of the 74th Highlanders who were moving up from the second line in order to take post on the right of Orrock, as ordered by Wellesley to complete his new line

A storm of fire burst upon these two isolated corps from Assaye and the Maratha line outside it, all their own guns had now been thrown out of action by the enemy's artillery Orrock's advance stopped, still Wellesley sent him an urgent order to move on without any gun The advancing British line was mown down by the fire of a hundred guns, well posted and rapidly served The havoc was severest in the right wing, where the picquets lost one third of their number Assailed in front and flank, unable to match gun to gun, Orrock's men at last broke

and ran back in confusion upon the 74th marching behind them Just then these Highlanders had lost their order in crossing some cactus hedges Seizing this opportunity, the Household cavalry (*huzurāt*) of Sindhia charged, cutting down the soldiers * The cavalry horde swept through the British right and charged back through them to its own place Thereafter one of their leaders (Jādo Rao Bhāskar) "lounged his horse about near the 74th and every now and then dashed forward and killed a European " [Elph i 76]

The 74th were reduced to a quarter of their strength (having lost 401 men out of 565), but with Highland tenacity the remnant of the regiment still stood round their colours in the bloody field On their left hand the British centre was broken, while their supreme commander leading the left wing of the line was hidden from view But they were not destined to be lost Suddenly on their right rear the bugle sounded the charge, a loud hurrah was heard, and the Greek helmets of the 19th Dragoons with their leopard skin front covers and dancing red tassels on the crest burst through the smoke and dust. The blue coats, mounted on superb horses, and followed by the 4th Madras cavalry, charged the Maratha troopers and drove them back to the Juah *nālā* and beyond it

The iron tempest that had overwhelmed the British right had also broken their centre, consisting of two battalions of native infantry These Telingas, unable to advance or stand against such a fire, without the power of reply, swerved away from the enemy, and crowded in upon the 78th Highlanders on the extreme left "In many cases

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* According to the *Imurnāmah* of Basawan Lal (ms ii 227) Sindhia himself took part in this charge, "he pierced the English line and beating them reached their rear, whence he charged back and returned his own troops" The leader of this attack, I believe, was Jādo Rao Bhāskar, his diwān, leading the *Huzurāt* or Household Cavalry of the Raja His feat was noticed, and it was also noted that this Maratha hero was shot by the 19th in the Juah *nālā* Now, we know that Jādo Rao was the only leader shot in the *nālā* No common Maratha trooper's death in the *nālā* would have been noticed by the English Anand Rao Nimbālkar was another captain of Sindhia who fell among the cavalry Gulgulé, 15 Oct , Kharé, xiv 6749

the sepoys sheltered themselves from the deadly shower in hollows in the ground, and even in some few instances, not all the endeavours of their officers could persuade them to move forward" "Several sepoys who were either wounded or pretended to be so, crouched down with their backs to the enemy, in such a manner that their knapsacks completely sheltered them from everything but round shot" Nor did the terror altogether spare the whites, Elphinstone reports that "two of the European officers were vehemently accused of skulking in a *nālā*"* But the main body of the sepoys in the centre were at last rallied by their officers and led on to join Wellesley's new line parallel to the Juah completed by the addition of the other two sepoy battalions from the original second line

§ 10 *Assaye—second stage of battle, the advance to the Juah*

It was Wellesley himself, leading the British left, who turned the tide of the battle At a quarter to three P M the word was given to advance and the 78th Buffs and two sepoy battalions marched in quick time upon the enemy, without firing a shot On coming within 150 yards of the enemy's line, they stopped for a moment to prepare for charging The campoo opposite them fired a volley, "and about the same time some European officers in the enemy's service were observed to mount their horses and ride off The 78th instantly redoubled its pace, and the enemy's infantry, deserted by its officers, broke and ran The 78th overtook and bayoneted a few individuals The gunners, however, held firm to their guns, many being killed in the act of loading and none quitted their posts until the bayonets were at their breasts"†

* Telingas crouch, Fortescue, v 28 Elphin i 67 Blackiston, i 164 and 174 White officers skulk, Elphin i 76

† Macveigh, *Hist Records of 78th Highlanders* (1887), p 53 "Pohlmann, whose conduct throughout the day bears strong marks of treachery to his master, seized the opportunity to retreat" Fortescue, v 31

"Their infantry fought well, and stood by their guns to the last Their cavalry did us but little mischief" (A W in Gurwood, ii 327)

The new British line that faced the Maratha position parallel to the Juah was a very thin one, and the battle had yet to be won. The English army had covered the quarter circle from the south to the west by forcing its way onwards, but had had no time to conquer the enemy posts within this area. The whole field between their first and second positions was dotted with enemy pockets from which Wellesley's new line was being fired upon in the rear. Many of the Maratha gunners had concealed themselves under their gun-carriages, and several of the campoo infantrymen had fallen down feigning death, in order to escape the advancing British bayonets. The concentration of Sindhia's reserve and guns at the corner of Assaye still stood intact. And beyond Wellesley's extreme left, the full force of Sindhia's best infantry under Pohlmann (four thousand strong) had halted in a menacing posture, with their arms and munitions not yet spent.

But while the British line, without a single gun of its own, stood anxiously exposed to fire from front, rear and right, deliverance again came from its cavalry. The 19th Light Dragoons, only 360 strong, followed by the 4th Madras Cavalry, seeing that the enemy horse pushed back by their charge had crossed the Juah and were making off, themselves crossed that *nālā* by a ford a little east of Assaye and cut up these fugitives. With the arrival of the British line opposite to them, the enemy's infantry, from their position south of the Juah, began to retreat across the stream in increasing numbers. The intense anxiety of Wellesley's hard pressed infantry found relief in loud huzzahs as they saw their own cavalry under Maxwell dress their ranks on the opposite bank and sweep the enemy crowds on that side from end to end, cutting down the fugitives and destroying their formation. Then they recrossed the Juah and drew up on the left of Wellesley's line.

The sight took the heart out of the campoo infantry. The 19th Light Dragoons during their 24 years' service in south India had created for themselves a name of terror by

their toughness and vigour. They had cut off 500 men of Tipu Sultan's choice Body Guard by driving them into a bound hedge and there killing every one of them with the sword and lance. No Indian horse or foot could face them. The right wing of the Maratha second line was dissolved. [Biddulph, 73.]

§ 11. *Assaye—end of the battle.*

Wellesley's battalions at last marched in force upon the Maratha reserve in front of Assaye, but the campoo did not wait for the attack; the men crossed the Juah behind them and retreated in good order.

All this time there were many dispersed knots of the enemy's artillery-men and infantry in the field behind Wellesley. That General therefore turned a full circle from the Juah and marched southwards mopping up these enemy pockets by hard fighting and taking possession of their guns. And then the battle ended about sunset, after three hours of strenuous fighting. The last action of the day was an abortive charge of the 19th upon Pohlmann's unbroken column, which was not pressed home, as Maxwell fell down shot dead just before the moment of impact and his men retired in confusion. Pohlmann marched away from the field with his force intact. Raghuji Bhonslé had fled away very early without striking one blow. Daulat Rao Sindhia too had taken to flight, but after delivering one attack on the 74th. His diwān Jādo Bhāskar had fallen fighting in the Juah *nālā*, and sixteen hundred dead warriors strewed the plain or choked the ravine as silent witnesses of the future Duke of Wellington's first victory.*

But there was no pursuit. Throughout the day, the British cavalry had been employed to do the work of infantry and again and again to attack unbroken formations without any fire support. Men and horses had been

* 198 Europeans and 230 Telingas killed on the English side, 1200 sepoys, mostly Purbias, with one or two hundred Marathas by race killed on Sindhia's side. The wounded were three or four times as many. With Jādo Rao, Ananda Rao Nimbālkar also fell. Khare, xii. 6749.

worked off their feet, after a twenty mile ride to the field without rest or food, before going into action.

Thus ended the battle of Assaye. "Success was only gained by the most extraordinary exertions on the part of every man in the field. ... Every man, British or native, played his part with superlative gallantry. First and foremost, Wellesley himself was throughout, in the hottest of the fray, calm, cool, and collected as if at a field day. Two horses were killed under him; of his staff eight out of ten sustained wounds to themselves or their horses. ... The Sepoys showed not less bravery, and Wellesley confessed that they astonished him." [Fortescue, V. 32.]

But the loss of the British was heavy, amounting to 644 Europeans and 910 Indians killed, wounded and missing. The 74th Highlanders had 401 men out of a total strength of 565 as their casualty. The two sepoy battalions on the right between them had 102 casualties. The cavalry brigade suffered 200 men and 715 horses in killed, wounded and missing. The Sindhian army left 1200 dead on the field, nearly all of them of the same race as the E. I. Co.'s Bengal Army sepoys,—and the wounded must have been four times as many. Sindhia's regular infantrymen fought well, and were described by Wellesley as the best troops in India next to the Company's sepoys. But they fought with the artillery only, as the British General repeatedly noticed. Their cavalry disgraced itself. The victors captured 120 guns in the field and the pursuit.

§ 12. *Effect of the victory at Assaye.*

Assaye cannot be called a decisive battle if it was expected to crush Sindhia's power by that one blow. At first he put a brave face on it and argued that he had inflicted a thousand casualties on the English force and lost the day only through his unprepared state at the time of the attack, the cowardly flight of Raghuji Bhonsle, and the seduction of his own battalion commandants by the English. Untaught by the past, Daulat Rao talked of pursuing the

traditional Marātha policy of sending predatory hordes into Haidarabad territory, Bengal and Punā, which had failed before Assaye.

But the moral effect of Assaye was undeniable. No amount of bragging could conceal the fact that his French trained campoo and indigenous cavalry alike had been signally beaten by a very much smaller British force and no Marātha would thenceforth make a stand before the victors of Assaye in an open field. Worst of all, this battle caused a final breach between the two Confederated Rajas. The Marātha world blamed Raghuji Bhonsle for his selfish flight at Assaye, without giving his ally the least help. Sindhia therefore vowed to take his revenge by leaving Bhonslé's troops in the lurch in their next encounter with the English, and this he did at Argāon (28th November), where Sindhia's contingent stood still on one side and moved off as soon as the English advance began.

The very large number of men and horses killed and wounded at Assaye, enforced a fortnight's halt on General Wellesley for the relief of the sufferers. Then he launched his long cherished scheme of carrying the war into Bhonslé's own territory by sending Stevenson on to invade Berar. At the same time for some weeks he had again to march rapidly forward and backward, in order to head the enemy off from the Nizam's territory and the Peshwa's districts. But these threatened raids of Daulat Rao now ended in the same futility as before Assaye. And the English pressed on with their conquests, tightening their grip on the throats of Daulat Rao and Raghuji. Burhanpur and Asirgarh were captured by Stevenson on 16th and 21st October. Gawalgarh, where Bhonslé had stored his treasure, fell after a bloody assault on 14th December.

§ 13. *Sindhia and Bhonslé make peace*

In the other theatres of the war, too, unrelieved disaster had overtaken the confederated Rajas. Bārabāti fort in Katak had been stormed by the English on 14th October

and the province of Orissa had come into English possession, thus allowing them to join their provinces of Bengal and Madras by an unbroken land route. In Gujrat Broach was stormed from Sindhia's garrison on 29th August, and the fort of Pāwāgarh and its town of Champaner fell on 17th September. So, too, in Bundelkhand, Shamsher Bahadur had been defeated on the Ken river (at Kapsā) on 10th October and Kalpi captured on 4th December, and that Maratha vassal forced to become an English pensioner by the end of the year. Ambāji Inglé had made a treaty of alliance with the English on 16th December, one result of which was the delivery of Sindhia's rock-fortress of Gwalior to the English (effected on 4th February 1804).

Thus dense clouds of failure and loss completely encircled the two Rajas as the year 1803 approached its end. Raghuji Bhonslé was the first to recognise his own helplessness. On 17th December, he signed the Treaty of Deogāon, by which

1. Raghuji Bhonslé ceded to the E. I. Co. the province of Orissa.

2. Raghuji Bhonslé ceded to the British and the Nizām all the territory to the west of the Wardhā river and south of the hills on which Narnālā and Gawilgarh stand, but he retained some districts (with a revenue of four lakhs) south of these two forts.

3. The Bhonslé Raja renounced all his claims in the territories ceded as above.

4. In addition, the Bhonslé Raja agreed to submit all his disputes with any other Power, to British arbitration and also never to take or retain in his service the subject of any European or American Power or any British subject (whether European or Indian) without the consent of the British Government.

5. Raghuji Bhonslé renounced his adherence to the confederacy lately formed by him with Daulat Rao Sindhia, and engaged himself not to assist any chiefs hostile to the English. [MM iii 633.]

Daulat Rao Sindhia, too, at last saw reason. After some diplomatic shuffling and evasive talks, he signed the Treaty of Sarji Anjangaon, on 30th December 1803, on the following terms —

1. Sindhia ceded to the E. I. Co. and its allies, in perpetual sovereignty, all his forts, territories and rights in the Gangā-Jamunā Doab, and his rights and claims in the countries lying north of the Jaipur and Jodhpur kingdoms, and the Gohad Rana's territory.

2. Sindhia ceded to the E. I. Co. in perpetual sovereignty the forts of Baroach and Ahmadnagar and their dependent territory, and also the lands lying south of the Ajanta hills.

3. Sindhia renounced all claims of any kind in the above districts as well as claims of every description upon the British, the Nizam, the Peshwa and the Gaekwad.

4. But Asir, Burhānpur, Pāvāgarh and their dependencies were restored to Sindhia.

5. Sindhia confirmed all the treaties made by the British Government with his feudatories.

6. In his disputes with the Peshwa about their respective rights in Malwa and elsewhere, Sindhia agreed to abide by the decision of the E. I. Co.

7. Sindhia renounced all claims upon the Emperor Shah Alam II and engaged to interfere no further in the affairs of His Majesty.

8. Sindhia engaged never to take or retain in his service any European or American or British Indian subject, without the consent of the British. [M. M. iii. 634.]

§ 14. *End of the Mughal Empire*

Marquess Wellesley took care not to sign any treaty or engagement with Shah Alam II. The blind old shadow on the throne of Akbar and Aurangzib placed himself unreservedly under British protection, asking only for his defence and sustenance. The Governor-General by an order issued on 23rd May 1805, made permanent provision for

the support of the Emperor and his family in the following way: [MM iv 551]*

1 A specified portion of territory near the city of Delhi, on the right bank of the Jamunā was set apart, the revenue of which was reserved for the support of the imperial family But regardless of the actual shortage in the collection, the Emperor and his family as well as two courtiers were to be paid by the English Rs 90,000 in all every month (This was raised to one lakh in 1809, and to one and a quarter lakhs monthly in 1833)

2 In the lands thus set apart, the Emperor would have no territorial jurisdiction, their revenue collection and civil and criminal justice were to be administered by the British Resident

3 Two courts of justice according to Muslim Law, were established for Delhi city and the assigned district outside it, under British authority, the Emperor only retaining the right of confirming any sentence of death passed by these courts

4 The Emperor retained exclusive civil and criminal jurisdiction within the walls of the palace fort of Delhi

By the Treaty of Sarji Anjangaon, the Padishah of Delhi became a British subject It is not true that this treaty merely transferred to the British Governor-General the status of Sindhia in the political frame-work of the Mughal Empire Mahādji Sindhia had been a servant of the Delhi Emperor, he had been appointed Regent of the Empire by that sovereign, and every successor of Mahādji had to be formally appointed by the same sovereign before he could exercise the functions of his office It is true that Shah Alam II when first investing Mahādji in the robes of Regent had promised to make that office hereditary in the Sindhia

* Development of the scheme, Kaye's *Metcalfe* i 2[illegible] [illegible] *Dist Gazetteer* 22-23 How the revenue grew from 4 lakhs in 18[illegible] to 15 lakhs in 1813, and 30 lakhs in 1830 Kaye, 365 E Thompson's *Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, chap viii Brojendranath Banerji's *Rammohun Roy's Mission to England*, 55-63 For the crimes and justice within the palace limits, Kaye, 343 Thompson, 141 143 (F Wynne's) *Sketches of India*, pub 1816, pp 103-111

family But a master who can appoint is also legally competent to dismiss When on 14th November 1781, Mahadji Sindhia went to his first audience with Shah Alam, he prostrated himself before the throne and laid his head down on the Emperor's feet; he was then raised up and declared a son of the Emperor

But on 16th September 1803, Shah Alam hailed the British as his saviours No British Governor-General ever interviewed the Emperor of Delhi, none of them required his formal letter of appointment when entering on his office in any subah of the former Mughal Empire,* nor even did the successive British officers who administered the Delhi district and the Red Fort In fact, the English were the guardian and protector of the emperor, while the pageant on the Delhi throne was a perpetual minor, under the protection and control of the British Government, without any volition or motion of his own The British authorities also set their feet down on the immemorial practice of the Indian princes seeking confirmation of their succession to their States from the Emperor of Delhi Even in the territory reserved for the Emperor's support, called the Delhi district or Crownland, as well as in the city of Delhi outside the Red Fort, the administration was conducted by the British Resident, as the supreme executive authority, exactly as in any district of the Company's possessions, though the revenue was ear-marked for the imperial family and that too, only up to a limit of Rs 12 lakhs (1809), raised to 15 lakhs in 1833

Henceforth the Pādishāh was neither the suzerain of the English E I Company, nor the ally of the King of England and therefore his equal in international status He was not even like one of the vassal princes who accepted

* The Marquess of Hastings refused to visit the Emperor when he went to Delhi in January 1815, "because His Majesty expected the Governor-General's acquiescence in a ceremonial which was to imply His M being the liege-lord of the British possessions This dependent tenure could never be acknowledged by me" *Private Journal*, dated 22 Jan 1815

British paramountcy and exercised internal sovereignty within well-defined territorial limits, while their foreign relations alone were subject to British control. Even in Delhi, "the authority of the Shah was to be a harmless fiction", he had no revenue, law-courts or troops of his own [Kaye's *Metcalfe*, i 223]

Thus the Treaty of Sarji Anjangaon (30th December 1803) marks the true end of the Mughal Empire as a political institution

Note on Sindhia's infantry at Assaye

Arthur Wellesley wrote,—"Pohlmann's brigade of eight battalions was called the First [raised for Mahadji in 1790], which was destroyed on the 23rd Sept, the other two brigades in that action were four battalions of Begam Samru [but only *one* of B S actually fought,—J S] and four battalions of Dupont The latter was formerly Filose's, and was utterly destroyed by Holkar at Ujjain [18 July 1801] It was raised [again] at Punā . . The only brigade that escaped on the 23rd Sept was part of B Samru's They were with the baggage and got off in safety On the day of action I saw them go off There may also have been one battalion of Pohlmann with the baggage Dorsan was certainly killed, and the bodies of other Europeans, who did not belong to us, were seen [among the dead at Assaye]" Gurwood, ii 456 and 434 This proves the truth of the Maratha reports that 4 battalions of Filose, one of Samru, and [one or two] battalions of Sindhia (*i e*, the First Campoo) alone fought,—"the *five* battalions slew many men of the English"—"on our side 3 battalions were cut off, and the remainder, consisting of 15 or 16 battalions and the entire cavalry of both the Rajas retreated in safety"

CHAPTER LI

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW

§ 1 *Mughal imperialism contrasted with the British Social changes*

We can judge of the achievements and failure of the Mughal Empire most clearly when we look at it as the background of the British Indian Empire familiar to us It must be admitted that the Mughal Emperors united many provinces of India into one political unit, with uniformity of official language, administrative machinery, coinage and public service, and indeed a common type of civilisation for the higher classes They also recognised it as a duty to preserve peace and the reign of law throughout their dominions The British continued the same policy but more efficiently and over a much wider area of India. But here the parallel ends.

First, British paramountcy, by the system of subsidiary alliances, injected into our royal houses the germs of a moral decline which was incurable except by downright annexation

Secondly, in the British administered provinces, covering two-thirds of India, but not in the protected States, the aristocracy became extinct as an order Bernier had noticed in the middle 17th century that the Mughals had no hereditary peerage like that of England or France, but only an official and military aristocracy, personal in theory, but tending to be renewed in each generation with decreasing rank In British India this class lost its sole reason for existing, as it was manifestly incapable of supplying the administrative leaders required by the modern civilisation now introduced by the English rulers Thus, the wise Sir Thomas Munro did not fail to notice, as early as 1817, that, "There is perhaps no example of

any conquest in which the natives have been so completely excluded from all share of the government of their country as in British India."

The British recognised the remnant of the functional aristocracy of the Mughal empire as hereditary princes enjoying their lands, but without any duty to the new suzerain power. Thus India's face came to be pitted with more than six hundred Native States, like so many pock-marks, each legally of a higher status than the largest zamindari. Feudal rights and duties ceased altogether in British India, but in the mediatised States, the feudal services due to the Rajas disappeared as well as baronial turbulence, but their vassals continued to enjoy all the profits of feudalism.

An aristocracy of wealth has grown up in British India trying to fill the vacuum caused by the abolition of the aristocracy of birth. An attempt was made by the British to create, by means of the Permanent Settlement of Land (1793), a landed aristocracy, without the political status and powers of the feudal baronage, who would help in conducting the administration and maintaining rural peace like the landed gentry who did much of the administrative work of Great Britain in an honorary capacity before the Reform Act of 1832. They were expected to be enlightened "improving landlords" and justices of the peace. But the attempt totally failed.

Among social changes, the greatest achievement of British administration and modern civilisation has been the creation of a middle class independent of Government service and therefore more permanent and fundamentally stronger than the mansab-dār families of Mughal India. This class had become, by the year 1947, immensely larger in size, better educated, more influential and closer integrated with our life and government than the *āmils* and *munshis*, *faujdārs* and *dāroghas*, who formed the only middle class in the Mughal times, and who could not stand as a buffer between the autocratic baronage at the top and the helpless peasants and artisans at the bottom of Mughal Indian society.

The fortunes amassed and the social standing honourably gained by our modern great lawyers, physicians, engineers, and writers, were undreamt of in the Mughal times

The rise of this middle class has at the same time lifted up the lowest stratum of our society, which continually feeds the class just above it with recruits. It cannot be denied that as the result of social and economic changes, even more than the direct action of an enlightened modern Government,—there has been a fairer distribution of the wealth of the country among the different grades of the population in India, and that the servile conditions of Indian workmen's life that Bernier deplored, have ceased to exist No doubt, the improvement is being counteracted by the intensified pressure of the population on the soil which civilised rule brings in its train.

§ 2 *Economic life of India, how changed*

Under British rule, the change in our economic life has been as great as that of our social life Soon after the establishment of British paramountcy, India was struck by the full blast of the Industrial Revolution in England, then came the introduction of steamer transport to Europe, the opening of railways in India, and finally the cutting of the Suez Canal All these factors united to destroy the economic system under which the Indian millions had toiled, fed themselves, and provided the needs of their government for centuries during the middle ages Gone was India's monopoly of indigo, saltpetre and cotton fabrics in the world market She now sank into a producer of raw materials in the bulk instead of finished articles or of luxuries of small bulk and high value as in Mughal times Even her coarse and coloured cotton exports to the South and East Asiatic world ceased, though these had formed more than a quarter of the East India Company's annual investment in the Mughal times

The attempts made in the Eighteen seventies by Sir George Birdwood, Sir William Hunter and other kind Bri-

tish officers, to save our artisan class from starvation by promoting the manufacture and sale of curios and objects of art, for foreign tourists, had exactly the same practical effect as applying a mop to the Atlantic waves rolling on the beach of England. In the meantime the situation was hopelessly worsened by the rise in the price of food grains due to the inflation of currency caused by the vast amount of specie sent to India to buy her raw goods for export and to pay her labourers on the daily expanding roads and railways. The real wages of our labourers could never keep pace with the rise in the price of food and clothing. Hence the blank despair which faced M. G. Ranadé, Romesh C. Dutt and G. K. Gokhalé as they contemplated India's economic future near the close of the 19th century. Cash crops and mass production of some low commodities became, no doubt, novel features of India's economic life under British rule, but they could not fully offset the daily rising price of food and increase in the number of hungry mouths without employment.

§ 3. *Degeneracy of rulers and stagnation in the Indian States.*

The British empire by retaining the feudal organisation of society in the Native States, prevented reform in fully one third of this vast country. Thus a sharp cleavage in the standard of education and the conditions of life between British India and the Protected States was created, though the people on the two sides constantly mingled together by reason of their sameness of race, language, creed and often of family too. The political evil of feudalism, however, was removed by the English suzerain curbing the lawless refractory nobles and restoring the supreme authority of the Rajas. Internal peace was ensured in their dominions, but not progress, for a century and a half, while British India was advancing by leaps and bounds.

The subsidiary alliance system, while it fully met the dangers of foreign invasion and civil war, was not an un-

mixed blessing It robbed the people of the Protected States of the power of rebellion as the natural curative of misgovernment. Now began a rapid and hopeless decline in the moral character of our ruling Rajas and Nawābs. They continued to live as autocrats without the moral justification of being the leaders in war and fathers of clans that the founders of their dynasties had been Civil war, as a test for the survival of the fittest to rule, was now barred out by British bayonets As Sir Thomas Munro justly observed, "A subsidiary force has a natural tendency to render the government of every country in which it exists, weak and oppressive, to extinguish all honourable spirit among the higher classes of society . It renders the prince on the throne indolent by teaching him to trust to strangers for his security, and cruel and avaricious by showing him that he has nothing to fear from the hatred of his subjects"* Thus, as the result of a century and a half of enlightened British rule, the case of the Protected Princes in India was hopeless Nothing could possibly keep them alive in the modern order which burst upon India on 16th August 1947

§ 4 *Why England failed to form a nation in India*

When the British resigned their trusteeship for India in 1947, they had failed to give the Indian people a political education which might enable them to stand on their own feet This was not exactly due to selfishness on the part of our British protectors It is a tremendous task to fit a nation for self-government after six centuries of alien domination A king cannot be deposed by halves, and yet full responsibility for governing—and possibly also misgoverning, the dumb millions of India could not be handed over to untried indigenous leaders, till two successive deluges of

* Munro's letter to Marquis of Hastings, 12th Aug 1817 The Duke of Wellington agrees,—"As soon as a subsidiary alliance has been formed, it has invariably been discovered that the whole strength of the tributary government consisted in the aid afforded by its more powerful ally, or rather protector?—and from that moment the respect, duty, and loyalty of its subjects have been weakened" S Owen, Wellesley, 795, 773

world-wars within 30 years of each other upset all former political speculations and prophecies, and forced the hands of the rulers and the ruled in India. The transfer of India's sovereignty from British to Indian hands was a revolution, accomplished amidst nearly as much bloodshed, destruction of property and the people's misery as the French Revolution, though only the smallest portion of it was due to the rulers' obstinacy.

For this it is not fair to lay the blame on British selfishness. The fact is that while intellectual and moral reform can proceed apace from foreign impetus provided that the people respond to it, democratic government or true nationhood cannot be imposed upon a people by a decree of alien rulers; its necessary conditions are a long course of preparation or practical education and a surging up of the masses in search of the new political ideal.* But such a widespread popular upheaval was not possible under orderly, mechanical, British rule. The experiment of giving realistic political training to our people involved unimaginable dangers to public order and social stability. Hence, when the last British pro-consul withdrew with his legions, no Indian nation had been born to take his place.

§ 5. *Causes of the fall of the Mughal Empire.*

The Mughal Empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan, fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. This rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself; royalty was hopelessly depraved or imbecile; the nobles were selfish and short-sighted; corrup-

* As President Masaryk wrote, "Democracy is not alone a form of State and of administration. It is a philosophy of life and an outlook on the world. The authority of the State and of its laws is derived from general agreement among citizens upon the main postulates of philosophy and life." Could the effects of three centuries of subjection [under Austria] be effaced by the magic of liberty? Masaryk was certain that they could not, and that a long and careful process of re-education, moral and political, yet above all moral, would be needed to restore the spirit of Hus and Comenius. *Times Lit. Sup.*, 3 March, 1950, p. 131.

tion, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches the public service In the midst of this decay and co fusion, our literature, art and even true religion h perished.*

By this time India had ceased to produce leaders, wi the solitary exception of Mahādji Sindhia ; I do not inclu Jaswant Rao Holkar, because after a short and fitful care his genius crossed its limits and merged into madness Th in war, which is the supreme test of a nation's efficienc our people willingly accepted the leadership of foreigne and colourable imitations of foreigners The clearest pro of India's failure to produce leaders from among her so was, the fact of our Rajas giving the command of thei armies to French and Portuguese mestizoes, Eurasian lad run away from school, without a tincture of English educa tion, illiterate European sailors,† who used to dictate letter to their Indian clerks in Urdu for Persian, and even pur Indian black Christians of Goa.

The reason for it was the undeniable fact that Mughal India had ceased to have any school for higher teaching Hence, any man pretending to have had a foreign education which our princes were incapable of testing, was chosen for leadership, because no Indian could be found with the least knowledge of modern arts and sciences

During the decline of Mughal civilisation, education died out in India ; the only schools that survived devoted

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* In Nov 1778, the British Governor-General received a letter from the Emperor Shah Alam II (not yet old or blind) requesting the loyal gift of many rarities and *two maunds of the best Patna opium* for himself and a separate consignment of the same drug for his minister Abdul Ahad [*C P C* v No 1212, p 238] "Every evening Asaf-ud-daula stupifies himself with opium His confidants are the meanest and lowest people · he dreads the society of men of worth He has spent a *crore* of rupees in procuring entertainment . Beggars, buffoons, dancers and all that class, with fools, knaves and sycophants, compose the Court of this illustrious ruler of millions " (Sir J Shore's letter, in *Life*, i 407-408) And yet the Lucknow people were so debased as to adore Asaf-ud-daula's memory for his reckless charity to all who begged ! For the vices of Peshwa Baji Rao II, see Kharé, xiv 6710 Delhi palace vices, p 335*n* of this book

† Such as George Thomas, Nabab Perron, and James Skinner Others in the Aligarh district, noticed by Bishop Heber *Journal*, ii 342

themselves to the low but useful work of preparing clerks and accountants The primary education of the masses and the higher education of the classes, were alike undreamt of Our indigenous leaders revealed their true character in the case of the Sanskrit College founded at Benares by Jonathan Duncan The Peshwas had set up no great college of Hindu learning, and when the British established their Sanskrit College at Benares and Duncan expected the supreme head of the Brahman rāj to rejoice at this promotion of Brahmanic learning, Sir Charles Malet, the Resident at Punā, reported that when he talked enthusiastically about the merits of this "College for promoting, or rather preserving Brahmanic knowledge, he had the mortification of thinking that his descriptions, instead of producing admiration and emulation, have been received with marks of coldness and jealousy" [*PRC*. ii 146, Aug 1792]

Persia had ceased to be the school of the East and the spring-head of Islamic culture, with the degeneracy of her Safavi kings at the end of the 17th century, the Afghan usurpation, the blood-stained reign of Nadir Shah, and the long years of turmoil that followed his murder (1747) Nor did Islam in India produce a new generation of scholars when the stream of teachers from Irān and Khurāsān ran dry The great Sultans who had patronised Shia learning at their courts were now dead and succeeded by imbecile or impoverished grandsons

Ever since the middle of the 17th century, there had been close commercial exchange between India and England, but our royalty and ruling classes imported only European articles of luxury, none cared for European knowledge. no printing press, not even the cheapest and smallest lithographic stone was installed by the Mughal Emperors or the Peshwas They imported only what catered to their luxury and vice.

With the disappearance of true education, the literature now produced ceased to promote higher thinking, it merely pandered to rich men's pride and vice This sad fall from the

age of Akbar and Tulsidas is noticeable alike in the Persian compositions of Ja'far Zatali, the Urdu literature of the Court of Oudh, the Bengali works of Bharat Chandra Ray and much of the latest Vaishnav poetry of Bengal The Sanskrit and Persian languages had long ceased to bring forth any worthy fruit on the Indian soil The new race of Hindi poets, like the flatterers of the Muslim rulers, devoted their talents to the ignoble task of flattering their worthless patrons' vanity or stimulating their baser appetites

§ 6 *How the English have modernised India*

The fall of the Mughal Empire meant also the fall of the Maratha Empire. The Indo-Persian civilisation which had grown up under the shadow of the Delhi Pādishāhs and the new Hindu culture which had sprouted up under the Peshwas, were both dead by the end of the 18th century Their power for good was gone, and their lifeless corpses lingered in the country only to spread rottenness all around

But with the death of the Mughal Empire the middle ages in India ended and the modern age began In Europe the fall of the Roman Empire was followed by a thousand years of disorder and darkness, out of which Europe struggled back into light only in the 15th century Happily for India, the death of her old order was immediately followed by the birth on her soil of modern civilisation and thought It was as if the seedlings of the Renaissance and the Reformation had been planted in the city of Rome in 476 as soon as the last Emperor Augustulus had extinguished himself after the victory of Odoacer

But not immediately after The beneficent action of this change in India's destiny was at first delayed for 20 years. England was engaged in a death-grapple with Nepoleon from 1803 to 1815, and thereafter followed years of unrest and people's suffering at home before Britain's life could return to the normal In India, too, Marquess Wellesley's lightning successes at the end of 1803 were followed by a very great set-back and a temporary reversal of his policy It

was only after the Marquis of Hastings had completed Wellesley's unfinished task in 1818 that British imperialism in India found its feet

By a providential coincidence, that was just the year when the modernisation of India was taken in hand by some of her sons through their own enterprise, with the generous help of many Britons given in private, but not yet through any official agency. This was the opening of the Hindoo College (for giving high English education) on 20th January 1817, the starting of the first Bengali newspaper (the *Samāchār Darpan*) on 23rd May 1818, and the institution of the Calcutta Society for preparing, printing and distributing suitable text books in English and Bengali, on 4th July 1817

In deed, the intellectual and moral regeneration of India will be remembered as the greatest glory of British imperialism Such a renaissance has not been seen anywhere else in the world's history* On our hopelessly decadent society, the rational progressive spirit of Europe struck with resistless force First of all, an honest and efficient administration was imposed on the country and directed by a British agency to ensure peace and economic growth Then, within one generation the land began to recover from the blight of mediæval theocratic rule Education, literature, society, religion, man's handiwork and political life,—all felt the revivifying touch of the new impetus from the west. The dry bones of a stationary oriental society began to stir under the wand of a heaven-sent magician It was truly a Renaissance, wider, deeper, and more revolutionary than that of Europe after the fall of Constantinople.

In the reform of thought and morals, the pressure of rulers from the top is not half so potent an instrument as a passionate awakening in the people's heart, that alone

* From this point onwards, I repeat some passages of my earlier writings, e g, *India through the Ages* The priceless corpus of information on the Renaissance in India is Brojendranath Banerji's Bengali works *Sambādpatrē Sekāler Kathā*, 2 vols &c Also *Calcutta Christian Observer*, 1832-1864

can give the reform its necessary momentum and permanence

§ 7 *The Indian Renaissance*

The Indian Renaissance was possible only because a principle was discovered by which India could throw herself into the full current of modern civilisation in the outer world without totally discarding her past. She could approach the temple of modern art and science not as a naked beggar, not as an utter alien, but as a backward and at present impoverished country cousin of Europe. She had a spiritual and intellectual heritage of which she need not be ashamed before the world In fact, India was not called upon to plume herself in the borrowed feathers of European civilisation, she had only to assimilate modern thought and modern arts into her inner life without any loss of what she had so long possessed

Ram Mohan Roy was the first to reach the root principle of the Indian Renaissance, it is the belief that modern civilisation is not antagonistic to the heart of Hinduism, and that the external trappings in which the two civilisations differ are mere accidents He preached and showed by his own life that India would not lose her soul by welcoming western science and thought, but she would thereby rather recover her lost glory The basis of such a union between the modern west and the ancient east was the philosophy of humanism, which springs from the belief that God pervades the universe, *i e*, pantheism. Thus, the Hindu Vedāntist, the Islāmic Sufi, and the Christian Unitarian can worship at the same temple. So, he taught his countrymen to accept modern philosophy and science without fear or suspicion

The ground was prepared for this revolution in thought by the change in our education system which betgan in Bengal about 1810 and grew with increasing force from 1818 (Bengal will best serve as my illustration) Education through the English language was the lever which

moved the mediæval Indian world, after centuries of inertia under Muslim rule

The mere copying of the externals of European civilisation, without undergoing a new birth of the spirit, cannot produce a renaissance It led only to the growth of the Anglo-Muslim culture of the Oudh Nawab's Court, which was a bastard sprout producing no flower or fruit In it the inner spirit of modern civilisation was wanting, and only the outer trappings of European life were borrowed and put on the persons of Indians who then looked like idiots or buffoons No modern literature took its birth at the Lucknow royal court ; the pictures and poetry it produced were mostly pornographic, Asaf-ud-daula used to eat 64 grains of the strongest Turkish opium every day His successor, Sadat Ali knew English and a little French too, but turned out on the throne to be such a drunkard that he had to be assisted to his bed almost every night

This Renaissance was at first an intellectual awakening, and it influenced our education, thought, literature and art, but in the second generation (1840-1870) it became a moral force and set itself to reforming our society and religion. It began with our study of English literature and modern philosophy from books written in the English language, that is, with what is called higher or college education, as distinct from the mere knowledge of English for the work of clerks or interpreters to the British officers.

As Sir Charles Trevelyan wrote in 1836, "The curiosity of the people is thoroughly roused, and the passion for English knowledge has penetrated the most obscure, and extended to the most remote parts of India . There appears to be no limit to the number of scholars [in the English schools] except that of the number of teachers whom the Committee is able to provide "

In the next generation, the fruits of this English education produced a new and highly valuable literature in the provincial languages of India, at first by translation, next by adaptation from English works, and finally as original

compositions. In these writings the influence of English literature and European thought is unmistakable, but equally unmistakable is their success in adapting the foreign spirit and literary model to the Indian mind and tradition. Their best specimens represent the spirit of England clad in a half-oriental garb, but there has been no wholesale borrowing from the west.

As surely as the Renaissance in Europe was followed by the Reformation, so too, in India a modification of our social relations, our general outlook upon life, and our religious doctrines and practices was bound to result from our English education. Attempts at social reform began to take shape from 1855 under our own leaders. And the movement gained great impetus from the extensive legislative powers given to the people in the 20th century. Under British rule it was possible for an Indian to be in a minority of one, in his opinions and practices, and yet remain in society. In Mughal and Hindu times, such a free-thinker had to turn a homeless monk or the founder of a new outcaste sect, if he was not beheaded as a 'public enemy' (*Raghuvamsam,* xv. 51.),—there was no place for him in the community.

Modern India has become an independent, fully sovereign State. That political evolution has been made possible only by British imperialism. This is the reason why the noblest sons of India, like Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray, and Gopal Krishna Gokhalé, have recognised a divine dispensation in the fall of the Mughal Empire, as looked at from before and behind.

SOURCES

In this book an attempt has been made for the first time to use all the Persian and Marāthi narratives, despatches, and news-reports (often unprinted) relating to this period, along with the English and French materials which alone were used by my predecessors in this field of history. I have dug down to the very roots of original historical sources, namely the reports written by the actors in the scenes and their news-writers employed by them, which were absolutely contemporaneous with the events and authentic, subject only to the necessary allowance for the writers' personal prejudices.

The despatches (some in Persian, most others, for my last two volumes in Marāthi) were written by the diplomatic agents (*wakils*) kept by the different princes and nobles in the camps and courts of the other chiefs.

Persian

The news-reports, almost always in Persian, even when sent to Marātha or English employers, were written by a class of professional scribes, called *wāqia-navis* or *akhbār-navis*, who had continued to function in India since the reign of Akbar. Even the despatches written in English or Marāthi were usually accompanied by Persian news-sheets, which were translated after arrival into the recipient's language. All the Persian letters and news-sheets received by the British Government in Calcutta (with replies to them) were entered in a register in the form of abridged English translations, of which 7 volumes, covering the years 1759—1787, have been printed by the Indian Records Office under the title of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*. From 1782 onwards we possess a series of very long news-letters from the Delhi Court or Sindhia's camp, usually giving the events of one month and sometimes running to more than 320 lines each. An extremely valuable and almost complete collection of this last class has been recently purchased by the Bombay Government from the descendant of G. R. Kale, the Peshwa's agent at the Nizām's Court in the 18th century.

The largest collection of Persian news-letters of all classes in photostat or transcript is to be found in the Raghubir Library of Sitāmau in Malwa. Here has been brought together everything that could be copied from every known library elsewhere in the world.

Marāthi

The Marāthi despatches (and other State papers) fall into certain well-defined groups. First, the cream of the State archives of the

Peshwās has been published in 45 volumes under the title of *Selections from the Peshwas' Daftar*, edited by G S Sardesai Next comes the Menāvli Daftar, or the documents sent to the Punā Government officially and to Nānā Fadnis personally, while he was the prime minister (c 1780-1795) These were kept at his country-seat in Menāvli, a village in the Satara district They fell into the hands of D B Parasnis, who printed most of the material in his monthly magazine the *Ithās Sangraha*, under various titles The bulk has been sold to the Bombay Government by his heirs, and is now kept in Punā

Thirdly, the records of the various branches of the Patwardhan family of the South Maratha country, including a vast number of news-letters from Punā and the camps of the Peshwas' armies These have been carefully edited and printed by V V Kharé and his son, in 15 volumes, covering the years 1739-1810, and named *Aitihāsik Lekh Sangraha*

Fourthly, the Gulgulé Daftar, or the letters received by the Gulgulê family of Maratha tribute-collectors stationed at Kotā (now known as the Sardārs of Sarola house) These have been all copied with a Devnāgari typewriter, and are invaluable for Sindhia and Holkar, about whom the Punā archives become very meagre after 1783

Fifthly, the records preserved by the Holkar Government, carefully edited by B B Thakur in 2 volumes

Sixthly, the papers of the Nagpur Bhonsles, first printed by Sānê and Pārasnis, and reprinted in an enlarged and carefully arranged edition by Sardesai, Kulkarni and Kālé, under the title of *Aitihāsik Patra-vyāvahār* (1933)

In addition to these official collections, there are the old papers of many Marātha historical families, like the Purandarés, the Chandrachurs, the Hinganés, the Vaidyas, which have been published in separate sets, as well as miscellaneous collections of historical letters and other records printed in the *Kāvyetihās Sangraha* magazine, V K Rājwādé's *M Ithās Sādhanen*, &c The reader will find full details of all these records in my *House of Shivaji*

English residency correspondence

When the Marathi despatches run dry after 1783, the reports of the British Residents with the Peshwā, Sindhiā and Bhonslé, come to our aid These have been edited by me (jointly with G S Sardesai) under the title of *Poona Residency Correspondence*, 15 volumes, with three more to be printed to complete the series to the year 1818

New light from Marathi and Persian sources

For Wellington's Indian campaigns in 1803, the Marathi records cited here enable us "to see what was on the other side of the hill" as he called it, they make the great General's measures and policy understandable by supplying a full knowledge of the forces and facts that influenced each step that he took. The historian can now visit both the rival camps. The records in these two oriental languages, as well as the British Residents' despatches (of which the news portion is always a summary translation of Persian *ākhbārs* received by them), have made it necessary to correct many statements of the current English works on the European military adventures in India, such as Francklin's *George Thomas*, Keene's *India under the Freelances*, Herbert Compton's *Particular Account*, and above all the French lives of De Boigne and Perron. Martineau's *Le General Perron* is sadly unreliable for so modern a work by such a great authority.

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